Vidal defends Davide against Estrada attacks

STORY ON PAGE A2

Mexican Embassy apologizes to VP

By Dona Pazzibugan

A "VERY embarrassed" ambassador of Mexico yesterday apologized to Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. for the "terrible discourtesy" he suffered last week.

Ambassador Enrique Hubbard said Guingona should not have been turned

MEXICAN/A17

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Monday, March 25, 2002 ★ 58 pages / 5 sections / vol.17 / no. 107 P15

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Meralco scored for bid to hike electric rates

By Gerald G. Lacuarta and Ronnel W. Domingo

CONSUMERS must brace themselves for much bigger power bills not because of higher electric consumption as they switch on electric fans and air-conditioners to ward off the heat this summer.

The hefty increase will be due to Manila Electric Co.'s insertion of a P3.97-per kilowatt-hour increase in basic charges, according to a militant group.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) yesterday said power rates would go up by as much as 116 percent for residential consumers if Meralco got its wish.

Meralco is using the Electric Industry Reform Act that mandates the unbundling of various charges in order to sneak in a P1.12/kwh increase in the basic charges and include P2.85/kwh in other charges, according to Bayan spokesperson Renato M. Reyes Jr.

Unbundling refers to the breaking down of the basic electric charge into its component parts—generation, transmission, distribution and supply charges.

The proposal of Meralco also seeks to remove subsidies to street lighting, small- and medium-scale industries, government hospitals and the poorest segments of its customer base.

Meralco denied that its basic rate would shoot up by 116 percent.

In a statement, Meralco president Jesus P. Francisco said the company's petition with the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) was only for a rate increase of 30 centavos/kwh. The petition has been pending since it was filed in April 2000.

Francisco noted that the Lopez-controlled power distributor last increased its basic distribution charge in February 1994.

The amount that Meralco bills its customers has increased over the years because of the rise in the cost of electricity that the utility firm buys from the National Power Corp., according

MERALCO/A17

PMA class valedictorian Charlie Domingo Jr. is hugged by his father Charlie Sr. whom he had not seen for 18 years.

VAL HANDUMON

PRESIDENT Macapagal congratulates Cadet First Class Charlie Domingo Jr. after awarding the Presidential Saber to him for topping the Philippine Military Academy's Banyuhay Class 2002 during Sunday's graduation rites at Fort del Pilar in Baguio City.

GMA defends soldiers, says charges of human rights abuses an insult

By Rolando Fernandez and Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau
and Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday defended "the great Filipino soldier" from accusations of human rights violations, saying the charges were "an insult" to the Armed Forces and to all Filipinos.

"I consider it the height of misrepresentation for anyone to characterize the great Filipino soldier as a violator of human rights when so many of our soldiers have made the supreme sacrifice of death to protect our people from terrorism," she told the newest graduates of the Philippine Military Academy and their guests here.

A 14-member international peace mission is visiting Basilan, Zamboanga and Central Mindanao to probe possible human rights violations.

"This sweeping accusation is an insult to our AFP and our allies. It is an insult to our people. Our soldiers have sacrificed so much by holding their fire to keep civilians from harm's way," she said.

"They have been ambushed while

GMA/A16

Estranged pa of top PMA grad comes out

By Robert Abaño and Jovelyn Reyes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—It was a tearful three-minute reunion for Philippine Military Academy valedictorian, Cadet First Class Charlie Domingo Jr., and his estranged father on the eve of Domingo's graduation.

Charlie Domingo Sr., 52, whom the younger Domingo had not seen for 18 years, went to see his son on Saturday after reading in the INQUIRER about his son's graduation wish to meet him.

Their reunion, however, was brief.

"My son said, *'Papang, Papang, kumusta ka na?' Kinumusta ako, tapos niyakap ako. Naluha ako tulad ng pagkaluha niya habang nag-uusap kami. Nagyakapan kami* (My son said, 'Father, father, how are you? He asked me how I was doing and then he hugged me. Like him, I shed tears while we were talking. We hugged each other)," the elder Domingo said of their meeting.

On Sunday, after the graduation ceremonies for the PMA Banyuhay Class 2002, the elder Domingo tried to get near his son at the Borromeo Field here, but the younger Domingo's guardians took him to the other side of the field.

ESTRANGED/A17

'Goat' gets wish: Combat duty in Basilan

By Frank Cimatu and Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Be careful what you wish for. You just might get it.

The "goat" of the Philippine Military Academy's Banyuhay Class of 2002 learned this old lesson yesterday, with no less than the President of the Philippines as teacher.

Cadet First Class Gregory Inumpa Jr. stole the thunder from the class valedictorian by delivering a flowery speech. And President Macapagal-Arroyo responded by "punishing" him for it: She sent him on a combat assignment to Basilan.

It was actually a wish come true for Inumpa, whom the INQUIRER earlier reported wanted to be deployed in Basilan.

"This year, the PMA has produced a (special) method (of giving) privilege to the goat," the President said. "And for giving a very unusual expression, I am going to give him a reward. I heard that he is dying to serve in the southernmost part of the Philippines. I am now asking (Armed Forces Chief of Staff) Gen. (Diomedio) Villanueva to immediately bring him to Lantawan, Basilan," she said, to general laughter.

Inumpa, who came in last in the rankings, said he was surprised when the President gave him the "punishment" and said he had no inkling how

CLASS GOAT/A16

VAL HANDUMON

INUMPA: 5-minute speech for last in class.

RULE OF THUMB NA NGAYON!

E-gadgets cause mutation in hands of youths

LONDON—The use of gadgets such as mobile phones and GameBoys has caused a physical mutation in young people's hands, according to a British Sunday newspaper.

New research carried out in nine cities around the world shows that the thumbs of people under the age of 25 have replaced the index fingers as the hand's most dexterous digit,

E-GADGETS/A17

No room for complacency as business confidence rises

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

FROM a pragmatic point of view, it makes sense that Makati-based big businesses are disposed to paying 2 percent of their net income to finance an anti-corruption fund.

This is a significant finding of the Social Weather Stations' "Surveys of Enterprises on Public Sector Corruption" conducted in September-December 2001.

The willingness of the business community to finance such a fund is based on cold calculations of the economic (not political) costs of corruption.

As explained by SWS president Mahar Mangahas, who released the findings last week, more than half (54 percent) of the businessmen polled expect their net income to increase by 5 percent if the government could be reduced to a level close to Singapore's. Singapore is a point of reference because it has been perennially rated by independent assessments as the least corrupt country in Asia.

The respondents perceive that bribes constitute 15 percent of contracts with the government, representing costs and leakages that go into the pockets of officials instead of into savings and better project results.

What is significant, however, is that the surveys found that businessmen perceive that the costs are smaller this time than in the past. They put the bribery component at 15 percent, compared to 20 percent in 2000.

The new findings confirm what has always been emphasized by international financial institutions, in particular, the World Bank—that corruption is more than a moral issue in governance.

Empirical evidence shows that corruption exacts high economic costs not only in terms of the quality of projects hollowed out by kickbacks. Corruption is also anti-poor.

It redistributes wealth in the direction of corrupt officials and deprives the public and the poor the benefits of public projects.

In political terms, graft-ridden con-

NO/A16

SOBRA NA YAN, BAY!

Cardinal Vidal defends Davide

By Lino Gilbert K. Parone Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal yesterday defended Cebuano Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., who has been the subject of verbal attacks by jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada.

The Cardinal said he did not believe the serious accusations leveled at Davide by Estrada and his senator wife, Luisa Ejercito, who accused the Chief Justice of, among other things, being biased against the disgraced leader and his family.

"I cannot believe such a thing knowing the person of our chief justice," Vidal told reporters after saying Mass here during the feast of Blessed Pedro Calungsod on Saturday.

The cardinal, who is known to be a close friend of Estrada's, did not mention the ousted leader by name but chided him for his attacks on Davide.

Estrada had said that Davide had actively lobbied with him to be appointed as chief justice.

Vidal said he would respect anyone's right to say the things that Estrada had said to anyone else. But he drew the line in the case of Davide whom he claimed to know very well.

DAVIDE: Eloquence of silence JESS YUSON

"If they (the Estradas) have any other information about him (Davide), I do not know it. But these (attacks) are quite personal perceptions. I know him (Davide) as a person, I know his family," Vidal said.

He described Davide as an honest man, capable of hard work and dedicated to his job.

Vidal vouched for the goodness of the man who was the lawyer of the Cebu archdiocese for more than 15 years. It was how the cardinal came to know the chief justice personally.

"Whatever that (the allegations against Davide) is, I will not believe it," he said.

Vidal said Davide had denied that he had any political ambitions when he last talked to the chief justice recently.

He said he believed Davide "because he has (done) so much work in the Supreme Court. He cannot even think of a vacation. I believe him, I don't think he will lie to me, a Cebuano at that, my God!"

Vidal, who was the ousted president's spiritual adviser, said he last saw Estrada in 2001.

Estrada has always considered Vidal a close family friend. On his last day in Malacañang, he sought Vidal's advice on whether he should cling on to power for a few more days or step down.

Vidal said he has not visited Estrada this year.

"Besides, he reminded us, publicly, that we should respect the separation of the Church and State. So I have to put some distance (between us). If he himself said that, of course I would respect it," he said.

But he said he would visit Estrada again.

Asked what sort of advice he would give to the jailed Estrada, he replied, "I do not like to say it in public."

CEBU Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal stands up for Davide but stops short of criticizing his friend, ousted President Joseph Estrada, who has been badmouthing the Chief Justice. File photo taken in Malacañang on May 17, 1999. EDWIN BACASMAS

Gloria shows up at 2:30 a.m. in El Shaddai affair

SELF-STYLED Catholic charismatic preacher Mike Velarde has apparently not lost his political clout even after the disgraceful exit of his patron, jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada.

Velarde continues to enjoy special treatment from Malacañang, with President Macapagal-Arroyo going out of her way yesterday to attend his El Shaddai charismatic group's pre-dawn Palm Sunday celebration in Parañaque.

Although she had another early morning appointment, Ms Macapagal showed up at 2:30 a.m. at the El Shaddai gathering at the Amvel Land Business Park.

The President had to go to Baguio City for the Philippine Military Academy graduation ceremonies at 9:30 a.m. yesterday.

Ms Macapagal said it was a "big honor" for her to be invited to speak before the El Shaddai.

She said she had accepted past invitations from Velarde to join the group's Easter Sunday celebrations.

But since she had committed to going for Easter Sunday Mass in Limasawa, Leyte, she asked to attend the El Shaddai's Palm Sunday celebrations instead.

"To me this is a big honor. Brother Mike began this very good endeavor 18 years ago. On the ninth year I joined the El Shaddai. So our friendship has lasted that long," she explained.

Velarde, whose influence stems from his command of an estimated two million followers, endorsed Estrada in the 1998 presidential election.

Upon being sworn in as president, Estrada chose the lay preacher for his "spiritual adviser."

Ms Macapagal could be heard trying to woo the El Shaddai members yesterday.

"You are always in my prayers, in my heart and mind as I govern our country. May Yahweh El Shaddai bless us all," she said, using a phrase used by members of the group.

She asked them to support her emergency employment program for out-of-school youth to keep them away from illegal drugs.

She said the country would have a big chance of becoming progressive if Filipinos were united. *Dona Pazzibugan*

PAL announces Good Friday sked

PHILIPPINE Airlines will operate its full schedule of international flights and a reduced number of domestic flights on Good Friday.

PAL will also operate one extra flight each on the Manila-Hong Kong and Manila-Shanghai vice versa sectors, as well as two special flights routed Manila-Hong Kong-Cebu-Manila, on the same day.

Following is PAL's limited schedule of flights on Good Friday: Manila-Bacolod-Manila (PR 133/ PR 134), Manila-Cagayan de Oro-Manila (PR 183/ PR 184), Manila-Cebu-Manila (PR 853/ PR 854/ PR 849/ PR 852/ PR 855/ PR 856), Manila-Davao-Manila (PR 815/ PR 816), Manila-Iloilo-Manila (PR 141/ PR 142), Manila-Kalibo-Manila (PR 321/ PR 322), Manila-Puerto Princesa-Manila (PR 195/ PR 196).

Any flight not listed above is deemed canceled for March 29, 2002.

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Hunt reaches 'critical point'–AFP

Abu camp overrun; Burnham's family appeals for release

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Government troops have overrun an Abu Sayyaf guerrilla camp following a clash that left five rebels dead, officials said yesterday.

There was no sign, however, of the three hostages, including a US missionary couple, who have been held hostage for 10 months by the Abu Sayyaf, they said.

Aided by US spy planes that provide intelligence data, the frequency of skirmishes have increased in recent days. The military's Southern Command said the hunt had reached a "critical point" with ground forces closing in on what is thought to be the central band of rebels holding the hostages.

Saturday's clash was the third in as many days.

The family of Kansas natives Martin and Gracia Burnham made an emotional appeal on Sunday for the safe and swift release of all the captives. Philippine soldiers stumbled onto the camp near Basilan's Lantawan town on Saturday, the island's army chief, Col. Roland Detabali said.

By nightfall, the soldiers had forced their way into the camp and recovered the bodies of five Abu Sayyaf rebels after their comrades fled into surrounding jungle, Detabali said.

Also recovered were combat food rations, improvised tents and some 50 rounds of M-16 automatic rifle ammunition.

"Pursuit operation is ongoing and we expect more clashes any time," Detabali said.

On Sunday, Martin's father, Paul Burnham, and the couple's children made an impassioned plea over a local radio station for the release of their family and of Filipina nurse .

"We are hoping that they will be released soon. The children really do miss their parents," Paul Burnham told Radio Mindanao Network by telephone from Kansas.

John Paul Burnham, Martin and Gracia's son, said: "I just wanted to let the captors of my parents know that I really miss them a lot.

"I miss my mom and I miss my dad. So if you could please let them free. Please let them go. Dad and mom, if you are listening now, I want you to know that I love and miss you and pray for you every day."

The Abu Sayyaf, which has been linked to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, is now the subject of a joint US-Philippine military operation on Basilan.

Some 160 US Special Forces troops are assisting the Filipino military in its hunt against the rebels.

TWO heavily armed soldiers atop a truck patrol Lantawan town in Basilan. REUTERS

President Macapagal-Arroyo, addressing graduates at the elite Philippine Military Academy in northern Baguio city, stressed the local military should be "more forward looking" and responsive to the global war on terrorism.

"We see this in Basilan, and we must see that it is much, much more than a shooting war," Ms Macapagal told the 138 PMA graduates, who will make up the future brass of the armed forces.

The Philippines has to close ranks with the US and its allies in order to beat terrorism which has "become very transient and rapidly shifting," she said.

"This is the only way we can achieve meaningful, if not permanent victory," Ms Macapagal said, as she defended the joint exercises from critics.

She said those accusing the local army of violating human rights in Basilan were insulting the armed forces and its allies as well as the majority who support the action. **AFP**

'Honesty still alive in RP,' says Korean

"HONESTY is still alive in this country."

Thus declared a relieved Korean tourist whose lost handbag containing the equivalent of P54,000 was returned to her at the Manila Domestic Airport in Pasay City recently.

The handbag was found by Virginia Adeva, a non-uniformed agent of the National Action Committee on Anti-Hijacking and Anti-Terrorism (NACHAT) stationed at the domestic airport's terminal 1 departure area.

Adeva promptly turned over the handbag to her superiors, who paged its owner identified as Choi Youn Jung, a Korean national about to board an Asian Spirit flight bound for Caticlan.

The handbag contained $1,000, roughly equivalent to P51,000, and 91,000 Korean won, worth about P3,000.

Choi thanked Adeva profusely, saying "honesty is still alive in this country."

Interior Secretary Jose Lina Jr. commended Adeva, describing her as " a source of pride for all Filipinos. May she be an example to her colleagues and other government personnel," Lina said.

Adeva's act of honesty was a welcome turn to the recent rash of stories of foreign tourists being victimized by Filipinos, even uniformed security personnel.

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- Capacity to supply a minimum of 5,000 units per single model of the set per order
- Supply Chain Management capability, including, but not limited to:
  - Warehousing/storage and local mobilization of stocks, free-of-charge
  - Just-in-time delivery
- Certification of quality approval for models currently in the market
- Certification of NTC Interface Approval, if any

Interested Suppliers may secure the Request for Information and other relevant documents from Ms. Josefina C. de Leon at tel. (+63 2) 893-6893. Interested parties may secure the necessary documents after submission of Letter of Intent to participate in the RFI using official Company paper with letterhead.

Note: Document must be picked-up by interested Suppliers on or before April 3, 2002.

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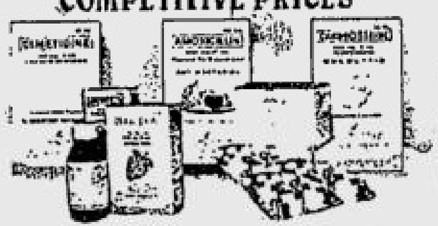

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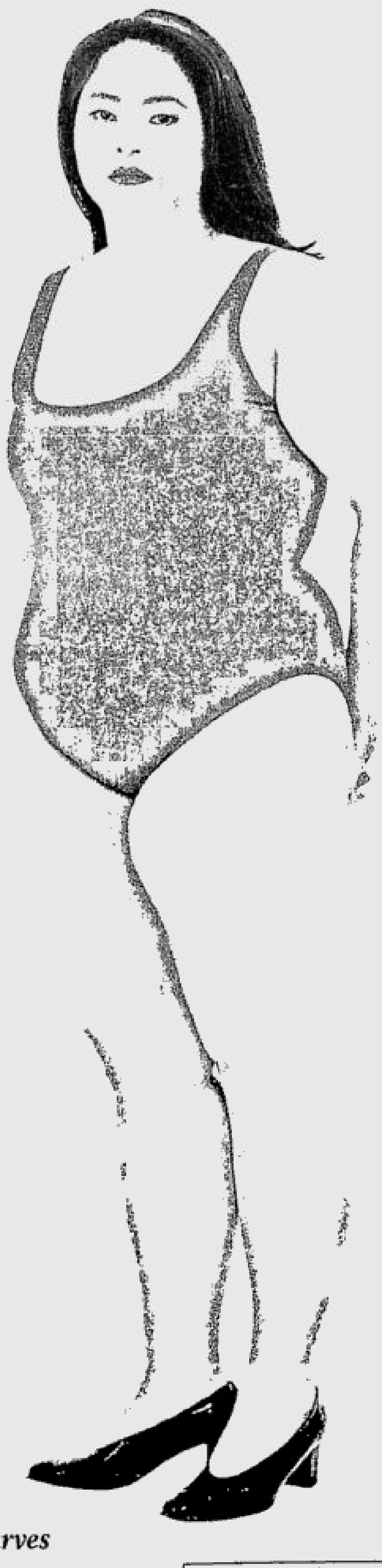

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RP asks Malaysia to help ease refugees' misery

KUALA LUMPUR—The Philippines has appealed to Malaysia to help reduce the impact of the deportation of thousands of its citizens in a major crackdown on illegal immigrants.

Ambassador Jose Brillantes said "timely information" from Malaysia on the deportations would reduce the burden on authorities in the poverty-stricken southern Philippines who are being swamped by deportees.

Brillantes said the large-scale deportations from Sabah state on Borneo island would be a financial strain on the Philippines' local authorities.

"Of course, the requirements for relocation, temporary quarters and food will impinge on the local authorities resources," he said.

"We are in close coordination with Sabah authorities. If at all, we would like to have timely information of how many will be deported and what ships are used.

"This will allow us to relay information to Philippines agencies so that they can make preparations and not be caught by surprise. However, both sides are trying to make the deportation orderly and gradually," Brillantes said.

Since Feb. 26, some 10,000 squatter homes have been demolished in Sabah and 6,378 illegal immigrants, mostly Filipinos, have been detained.

The Filipino illegals are given one-way tickets and put on ferries bound for Zamboanga city in the southern Philippines from Sandakan town in Sabah.

The action in Sabah is in line with a tougher approach throughout Malaysia, which is home to 750,000 legal foreign workers and hundreds of thousands of mainly Indonesian illegal immigrants.

Malaysian rights group and opposition parties have criticized the mass deportations, describing the destruction of homes and the detention of women and children as inhumane.

Yap Swee Seng, spokesperson for the rights group Voice of the Malaysian People, said that the government should adopt a humane approach in dealing with the illegals.

"If they want to deport them, they should not go around and demolish their homes. It is violation of human rights. What's more, they are keeping children in detention centers," he said.

"The government should formulate a policy to deport them voluntarily and not arrest and deport them by force." **AFP**

UNIVERSITY OF THE PHILIPPINES
Diliman, Quezon City

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The University of the Philippines - Diliman Bids & Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested contractors to submit their prequalification documents for the Infrastructure Construction & Renovation Projects of UP Diliman for the calendar year 2002. Only licensed contractors (at least Category C) with IAC registration will be accepted. Specialty contractors for Landscaping, Electrical, Waterproofing, Communication and other Infrastructure specialty works will also be prequalified as separate groups. Contractors who are eligible will be invited to bid on the following Proposed Projects:

Renovation works at UPD Health Service
Renovation of Room 101
MBB Renovation Works at NCPAG Bldg.
CS Library & Administration Bldg.
Roof Repairs Renovation Works
Sampaguita Residence Hall Reroofing
& Misc. Works
Center for Women's Studies
Reroofing of Gonzalez Hall Center
for International Studies
Benton Hall Façade Improvement
CBA Bldg. Renovation of Tearoom
Alonzo Hall Power Supply for DILNET
at Malcolm Hall & Bocobo Hall
Renovation Works
Vargas Museum Renovation Works
Institute of Chemistry, PH Pav. 1 & 2
Renovation of Benton Hall

Electrical Upgrade of Service Entrances:
- Malcolm Hall
- Benton Hall
- Rizal Hall
- Palma Hall & Pavilions
- CBA Building
- Palma Hall Annex
- Benitez Hall
- Bartlett Hall

UP Diliman Infogate Nat'l Inst. of Physics
(NIP) Building
Phase 2 College of Architecture Building 1
Phase 2 College of Architecture Building 2
Phase 1 OA-OUR Building CSWCD Bldg.
Phase 4-B CSWCD Bldg.
Phase 5 CMC Media Center, Building 2 & 3
Various Renovation / Repair / New Construction
Works and various Structured Cabling projects

Prequalification forms are now available at the Office of the Campus Architect (OCA), Coral Building, Lakandula Street corner De los Reyes Street, UP-Diliman, Quezon City, upon payment of P300.00. Please call 920-5301 local 8032 / 8033 or 927-8656 for further inquiries.

A letter of intent addressed to the Chancellor through the BAC is to be submitted to the Office of the Campus Architect together with the accomplished forms. Deadline of submission of prequalification or eligibility documents is on or before 5 p.m., April 16, 2002.

The University reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any required formality in the bids received, or to accept such bids or to award any part thereof to any bidder/s whose bid/s is/are considered most advantageous to the University. The University assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any firm for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bid proposals, nor that it guarantees that a selection will be made.

EMERLINDA R. ROMAN
Chancellor

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 25, 2002
Monday of Holy Week

1st Reading: **Is 42:1-7**
Gospel: **Jn 12:1-11**

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany where he had raised Lazarus, the dead man, to life. Now they gave a dinner for him, and while Martha waited on them, Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus.

Then Mary took a pound of costly perfume made from genuine nard and anointed the feet of Jesus, wiping them with her hair. And the whole house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Judas, son of Simon Iscariot—the disciple who was to betray Jesus—remarked, "This perfume could have been sold for three hundred silver coins and turned over to the poor." Judas, indeed, had no concern for the poor; he was a thief and as he held the common purse, he used to help himself to the funds.

But Jesus spoke up, "Leave her alone. Was she not keeping it for the day of my burial? (The poor you always have with you, but you will not always have me.)"

Many Jews heard that Jesus was there and they came, not only because of Jesus, but also to see Lazarus whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests thought about killing Lazarus as well, for many of the Jews were drifting away because of him and believing in Jesus.

Commentary

Friendship; a party; honored guest: betrayal; shadow of the grave; murderous intentions.

How might an artist paint this gospel? Surely with contrasting tones: bright light and deep shadow.

We begin Holy Week with Mary's prophetic anointing of Jesus: she foreshadows his imminent death, honors him as God's anointed, pours out love and devotion too deep for words. Her action reminds us that our journey through Holy Week is a matter of the heart. The greatest commandment is not to understand, proclaim or obey, but to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are about to accompany Jesus to his Passion, desiring to be more intimately united with him, with an inner knowledge of the heart, so that the love which impelled Mary to give not just a few precious drops but everything may well up in our own hearts too.

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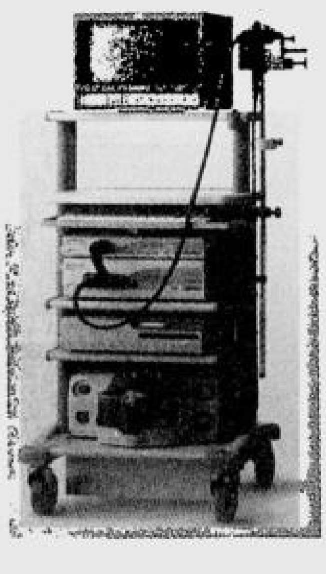

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UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS HOSPITAL
España, Manila

National Power Corporation

March 18, 2002

INVITATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND TO BID

The National Power Corporation (NPC) of the Republic of the Philippines invites all interested Cargo Protection Services Providers for Steaming Coal, to accredit and to bid with NPC for One Year Contract Pre-Shipment Inspection of NPC's steaming coal importations for its power plants and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) for the year 2002-2003.

Accreditation forms are available for issuance at the office of the Corporate Fuel Management Department (CFMD), Building 2, Second Floor, NPC-OBC, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of a registration fee of Five Hundred Pesos (P500.00). Those who have been previously accredited shall re-apply for compliance with the new requirements. Cargo Protection Services Provider with previous dealings/business relations with coal suppliers/traders/producers need not apply.

Accreditation shall be evaluated based on the set of criteria in determining the technical and financial capability to perform the contract. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished accreditation form is on **April 5, 2002**. Bidding among accredited Cargo Protection Service Providers shall be held on **April 26, 2002**.

(Sgd.) **FROILAN A. TAMPINCO**
Vice President
Head, GenCo 2 and Chairman
Fuel Procurement Committee (FPC)

(PDI -- Mar. 22, 24 & 25, 2002)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
MAYNILA, PILIPINAS

AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR PICC PROJECTS

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) would like to invite all prospective bidders to apply for prequalification for the design, supply and installation of a 5,000 sq.m. PVC Engineered Fabric Membrane Structure (EFMS) at the yellow parking of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC) to serve as its Interim Exhibition Hall. Scope of Work includes furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, services and other incidentals required to perform (a) design, supply and installation of EFMS Structure and necessary civil, electrical, mechanical, sanitary and electrical power requirements; (b) land/site development; (c) installation of ancillary facilities; and (d) all other items necessary to complete the work.

Requirements/Criteria to prequalify to bid for said project are as follows:

1.0 Should be a single entity which may be a partnership, corporation, joint venture or any other legal entity with a capital of which at least 60% is Filipino owned. The entity should be able to facilitate and provide the necessary architectural and engineering design, supply and contracting services for an Engineered Fabric Membrane Structure (EFMS) and its ancillary facilities to serve as the PICC Interim Exhibition Hall.

2.0 The bidder should have a total working capital of at least Fifty Million Pesos (P50,000,000.00) as of December 2001, computed as follows: *(Current Assets less Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all outstanding works under on-going contracts including awarded contracts yet to be started)* and a total net worth of One Hundred Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00)

3.0 With a complement of duly licensed and qualified Engineers and Architects with sufficient experience and training to manage, design and certify the required technical drawings and specifications to complete the proposed project.

4.0 Should have a working arrangement with a reputable Engineered Fabric Membrane Structure (EFMS) company with the following background.
  a. *International professional experience for the past five (5) years specializing in the design, assembly, installation and/or manufacture of fabric structures for commercial/institutional organizations intended for exhibition, consumer and trade fairs, banquet and special events purposes.*
  b. *Should have supplied and installed at least five (5) similar EFM structures, one of which has a total floor area of at least 5,000 square meters.*
  c. *Should be able to provide a product warranty of at least 15 years for the structural design and 5 years for the fabric against any defects. In case of a joint venture or a partnership, all warranties shall be answered for by the local partner of the bidder.*

5.0 Should have a working arrangement with a General Contractor with a valid Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License with an Inter Agency Classification (IAC) of Large B (for Building and Industrial Plants) for the past three (3) consecutive years with the following background
  a. *Has completed in the past five (5) years at least three (3) commercial or institutional construction projects of similar complexity, one of which costs at least Fifty Million (P50,000,000.00) Pesos.*
  b. *Willing to assume all product and work liabilities during and after construction of the EFMS and its mixed civil works requirements.*

6.0 Must submit the following documents.
  a. *Letter of Intent to Bid for the Project*
  b. *Applicable Joint Venture or Partnership agreement establishing the proponents included for the supply and installation requirements of the project.*
  c. *Brochures with photos illustrating among others actual installed fabric structures, framing and auxiliary facilities. Include actual photos of local projects, if any.*
  d. *Certificates of satisfactory performance (for at least 2 biggest of the previous fabric structure project installations cited) signed by the client's authorized signatories. Certification form can be obtained from the AHCPP Secretariat. Facsimile or e-mail certifications will be accepted. The Bank reserves the right to validate such certifications and shall automatically disqualify any bidder who falsifies data on these documents or issues fake certifications.*
  e. *Sample/s of fabric structure material to be proposed.*
  f. *Applicable licenses and certificates such as SEC/DTI Registration, Articles of Incorporation and Business Permit.*
  g. *Audited Financial Statement for the last three (3) years of the proponents.*
  h. *Affidavit declaring that the bidder or any of its subcontractors/consultants has not committed any civil, criminal or local government violations in the practice of their business.*
  i. *Authority to distribute or supply and install the EFMS component of the project.*
  j. *Authenticated copy of Contractor's License, and*
  k. *Contractor's Information Sheet (BSP Form).*

Documents may be obtained from AHCPP Secretariat, Room 204, Second Floor - Five Storey Building, BSP Complex, A. Mabini corner P. Ocampo Streets, Manila. Date and time of issuance is until April 5, 2002, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn. Cost of form is two hundred pesos per set (P200.00/set). Deadline of submission of Prequalification Documents is on April 10, 2002.

Notice of Prequalification/Predisqualification shall be issued on April 23, 2002, 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn at the AHCPP Secretariat together with the issuance of Bid/Tender Documents to prequalified contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents (P2,000.00/set).

For inquiries, please call AHCPP Secretariat at Tel. No. 524-7011 local 3143.

Guidelines stipulated in the provisions of Executive Order No. 262 Series of 2000 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations, as amended and other applicable rules and regulations shall apply relative to prequalification, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract.

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractor/s whose bid/s is/are evaluated to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) **VICENTE B. VALDEPEÑAS, JR.**
Chairman

(Sgd.) **JUAN QUINTOS, JR.**
Co-Chairman

(PDI -- Mar. 24 & 25, 2002)

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Security worries deepen among expats

SINGAPORE—Concerns over personal security have deepened among foreign business executives in India, Indonesia and the Philippines partly due to crime and a rise in religious militancy after Sept. 11, a regional survey showed.

Housing has improved in China and Vietnam as quality homes are built to meet the demands of expatriates, the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) said in its latest survey of the quality of life among foreign executives in the region.

There remained a dearth of Broadway plays and rock concerts in Asia, but this is offset by the region's rich indigenous culture, it said in the survey of 1,000 expatriate business people.

The quality of healthcare has improved since last year in such countries as China, India, Japan, South Korea and Thailand.

Respondents rated the quality of primary schools as good in most of the 12 economies surveyed, but "very few" were perceived to offer university-level educational opportunities aside from Hong Kong, Singapore, and lately China.

Overall, Singapore was voted the country offering the best quality of life for expatriate families for the second year in a row since wresting the title from the Philippines.

On a scale from zero to 10, with zero the best possible grade, Singapore got 2.26.

Thailand came in second 3.45, followed by China 3.76, Malaysia 3.84 and Taiwan 3.98. Hong Kong was in sixth place with 4.04, trailed by South Korea 4.09, Japan 4.14, the Philippines 4.84, and Vietnam 5.42.

India at 5.68 and Indonesia 6.59 rounded up the last two places.

All 12 economies were graded on the basis of a slew of variables including how the expatriates viewed the quality of housing, education, health care, personal security and entertainment in their places of residence.

PERC noted that the most notable decline was in the area of personal security, due to heightened concerns after suspected Muslim militants hijacked passenger planes and rammed them into buildings in New York and Washington last Sept. 11.

India, the Philippines and Indonesia—where PERC said Islamic activism has increased as a problem—saw their grades worsen the most.

"Expatriates living in these countries do not feel as safe as they did before," the Hong Kong-based PERC said. "In most cases, social unrest has been aggravated by other problems as well, including basic crimes against persons and property."

In contrast, executives said they felt more secure in countries that took tough action on the problem when it occurred, among them China, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Perception of the standards of Indonesia's international schools have been weighed down by security concerns among parents.

Like Indonesia, personal security worries are beginning to adversely affect expatriates' perception of the Philippines, which had been voted as the best place to be 1999 and 2000.

While the quality of expatriate housing remains comfortable in Manila, "neighborhoods need to be particularly careful about security," it said.

International schools in Manila have also received good grades, but parents have to worry about the threat of kidnappings, PERC noted, adding the same is true for the country's excellent resorts.

For India, "recent bombings and talk of war on terrorism have apparently made expatriates feel a bit uncomfortable," PERC said. *AFP*

1 dead, 26 hurt in bus-train collision

ONE person was killed and 26 others were injured, five of them seriously, when a passenger bus collided with a train in Barangay Kalumanggi, Plaridel, Quezon, at about midnight yesterday.

Jose Asensi, a Philippine Information Agency official based in Lucena City and an officer of Kabalikat Civicom which has members in various Quezon towns, said the five seriously hurt passengers were taken to the Gumaca Hospital.

He said the Philtranco bus hit the engine car of the Philippine National Railways train, causing the train to derail. Salizardo Mataya, PNR station manager in Lucena City, said there were no casualties on the train.

Adel Guro, Philtranco dispatcher on the Pasay City-Northern Samar route, identified the lone fatality as Lourdes Acebuche, a resident of Catarman town, who was sitting at the front of the bus. She died on the spot, Guro said. ***Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Cynthia A. Borgueta, PDI Visayas Bureau***

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Armed Forces and Police Savings & Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY MADE that the **Armed Forces and Police Savings and Loan Association, Inc. (AFPSLAI)** will hold its Annual Membership Meeting on 27 April 2002, Saturday, at 8:00 AM at the Bulwagang Hen. Arturo T. Enrile (AFP Museum and Multi-Purpose Theater), Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City to elect the members of the Board of Trustees for the year 2002 and to transact other business.

(Sgd.) Atty. Samuel B. Padilla
Corporate Secretary

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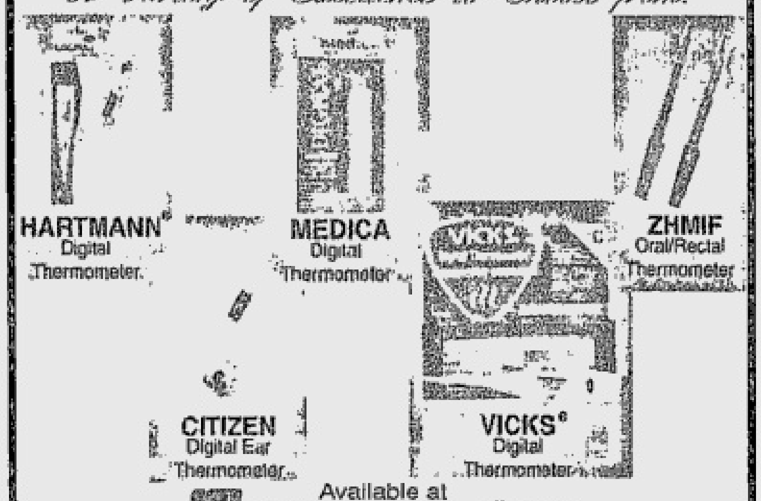
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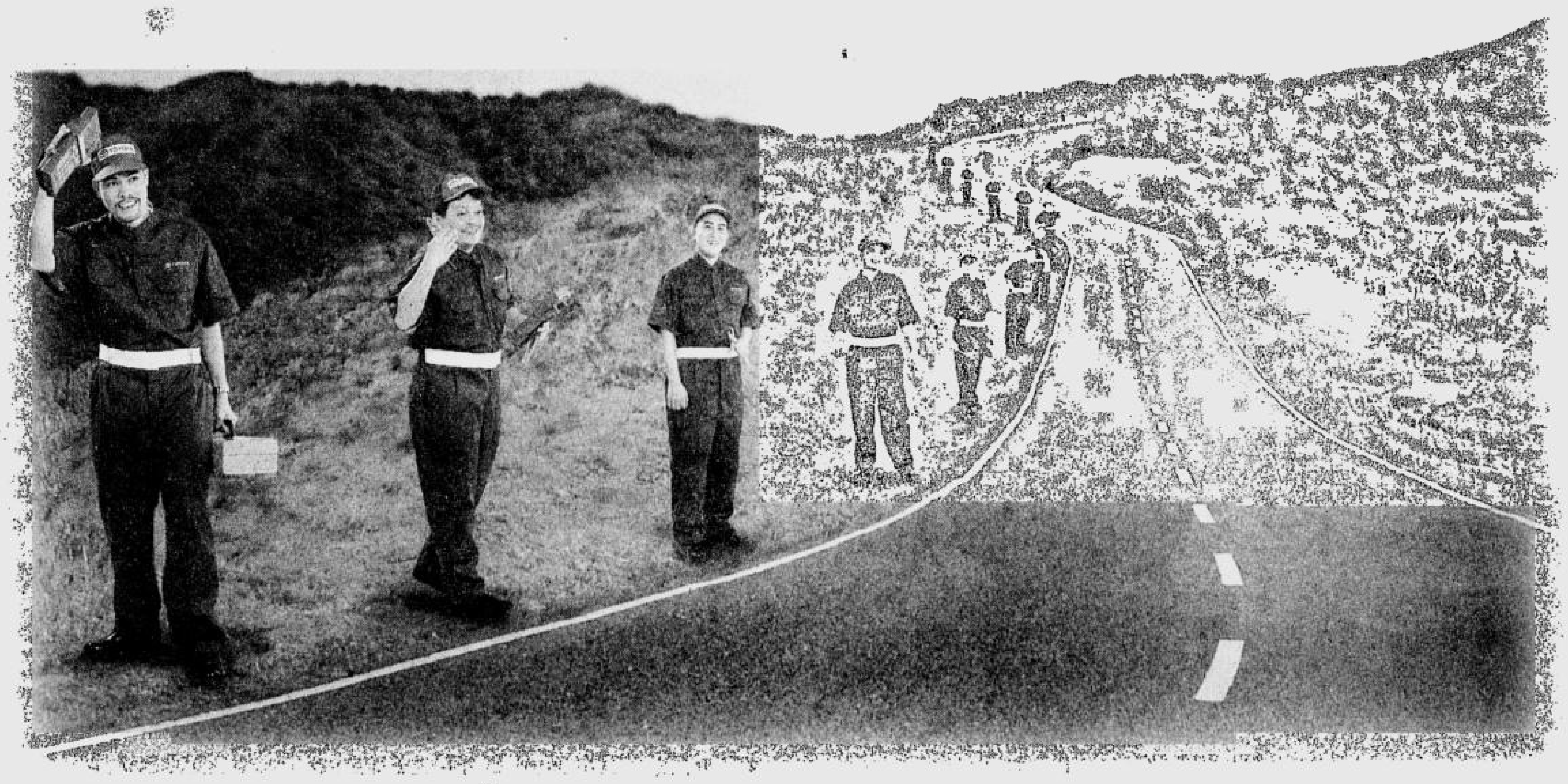

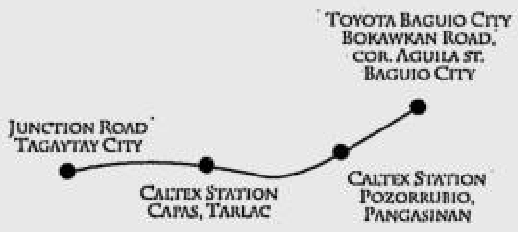
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House execs deny plan to stop Jimenez extradition

By Christine Avendaño

HOUSE leaders denied knowledge of any plans by the chamber to pass a resolution to block the extradition of Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, as alleged by a civil society group.

But they admitted that in the previous 12th Congress some colleagues did propose endorsing such a resolution although nothing came of it.

In a paid advertisement in the INQUIRER yesterday, a group calling itself the People's Organization for the Preservation of Law and Ethical Standards (Peoples) claimed that a "congressional resolution is being circulated to block (Jimenez's) extradition."

It said it was "a repeat performance" of a recent House resolution signed by 136 congressmen in support of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada's bid to be allowed to travel to the United States for medical treatment.

The United States wants Jimenez extradited to face charges tax evasion, mail fraud and illegal campaign contributions filed against him in a US court in 1999.

Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez and Majority Floor Leader Neptali Gonzales II said they had not heard of any moves to circulate such a resolution.

Congress being on a month-long recess, such a resolution would be "difficult to circulate," said Gonzalez.

Not a lot of legislators would support such an "unpopular" issue, he added.

"It would be so ill-advised for the House to jump into the issue," said Gonzalez.

Besides, the resolution would have no force unless it is passed jointly by the Senate and the House and signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, an "impossible" prospect, Gonzalez said.

Manila Rep. Harry Angping, meanwhile, said that if there were such a resolution, he would be one of the first congressmen to be approached as he, like Jimenez, represented Manila.

All three congressmen said there had been talk of such a resolution in support of Jimenez last year during the early months of the 12th Congress.

Gonzalez said he first heard about it when the choice of Speaker was still being settled.

He said some congressmen apparently were opposed to a congressional colleague being extradited.

Angping said the whole thing "was said in jest."

He also pointed out that it came at a time when the executive department has not yet acted on the US request for Jimenez's extradition.

Angping said the paid ad meant to put "pressure on government and Congress." He said his position on Jimenez's case was for "the law to take its course."

Gonzalez also agreed that the paid ad was "an attempt to preempt any other moves in favor of Jimenez."

The ad, titled "Is Mark Jimenez Above the Law?" said that Jimenez's allies in Congress and even Ombudsman Aniano Desierto were coming to the congressman's rescue.

Time mag scion speaks at Iloilo graduation

By Ma. Doisa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Henry Luce III, the chair and CEO of the United States-based Henry Luce Foundation, made a quiet visit to this city to receive an honorary doctorate in literature from the Central Philippine University.

Luce, 77, is the eldest son of the late founding editor of Time magazine, Henry R. Luce. He was on the board of Time Inc. from 1967 to 1996.

The honorary degree was conferred on Luce by Dr. Juanito Acanto, the CPU president, and lawyer Perfecto Yasay Jr., chair of the university's board of trustees, during yesterday's graduation ceremonies.

Luce arrived in Iloilo City on March 22. He said he was not afraid to travel alone to the Philippines.

"I don't have enemies," he told a press conference on Saturday.

Addressing some 1,300 graduates yesterday, Luce began by saying that commencement speakers were expected to make nice pat similes about the adventure of embarking on the sea of life.

"I do believe life to be a great adventure and offers as many directions as the sea and far less boring," he said.

It was Luce's second visit to the CPU, which was founded in 1905 by missionaries of the Convention Baptists. He first came to visit 11 years ago when he inaugurated the university's library, said to be the "biggest, well-stocked and most modern library in the Western Visayas."

The library, worth about P28 million, was built partly through the P15 million ($500,000) donated by the Henry Luce Foundation. The remaining P13 million came from alumni donations.

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3. Government Service - Extraordinary and outstanding service or contribution for the public good and interest in any field of land reform and Comprehensive Agrarian Reform by any officer or employee of the government of the Republic of the Philippines.

Basic Guidelines

1. Who can be nominated?
   a. Individual/groups or institution who have extraordinary and outstanding performance in the furtherance of Land Reform or Agrarian Reform.
   b. Individuals, group of individuals or institutions whose work has evidences of sustained effect or contribution to land or agrarian reform over and above moral duty.
   c. Individuals, group of individuals or institutions whose contribution to the cause of land or agrarian reform of such for reaching consequences and emulation effect on man and society.
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   a. Profile of nominating individual, group of individual or institution.
   b. Nomination proposal, highlighting accomplishments based on criteria to qualify as Nominee
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In cooperation with this publication

Gov't deploys 500 detectives in Metro amid bomb scare

SOME 500 detectives are to guard vital installations in Manila in view of a bomb scare, the Interior Secretary Joey Lina said yesterday.

At least eight homemade bombs were recovered and defused in different parts of Metro Manila over the past week. The devices were made from rifle grenades, but lacked triggers to set off an explosion.

A hitherto unheard of group, the Indigenous Federal State Army, has said it planted the bombs.

In written statements accompanying the bombs, the group demanded the creation of separate federal states for tribal groups, Muslims and Christians in the Philippines.

Lina said the group had not "surfaced in the intelligence radar" in the past and that authorities were continuing to investigate.

He said the group could be a "smokescreen to hide the true identity of the people" behind the bomb scare. He did not elaborate.

The devices were not meant to explode, but only to scare, Lina said as he urged the public to be more vigilant but not to panic.

"Police have increased (personnel) on the beat by fielding more than 500 plainclothes men. These are detectives," Lina said.

The heightened alert led to the arrest of a man on Saturday carrying "gadgets" and what appeared to be explosives in Manila, although it was not certain whether he had anything to do with the bomb scares. **AFP**

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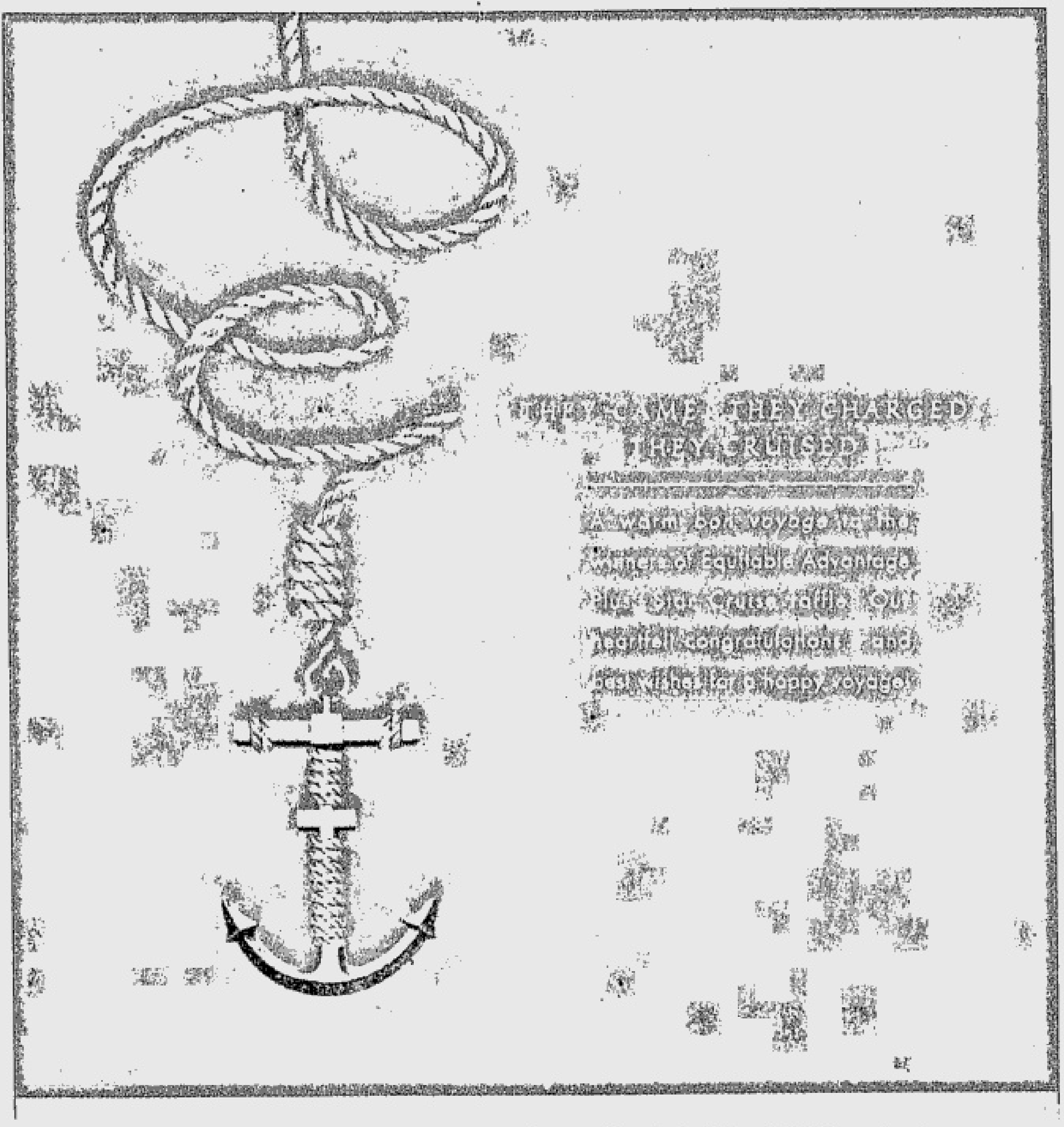
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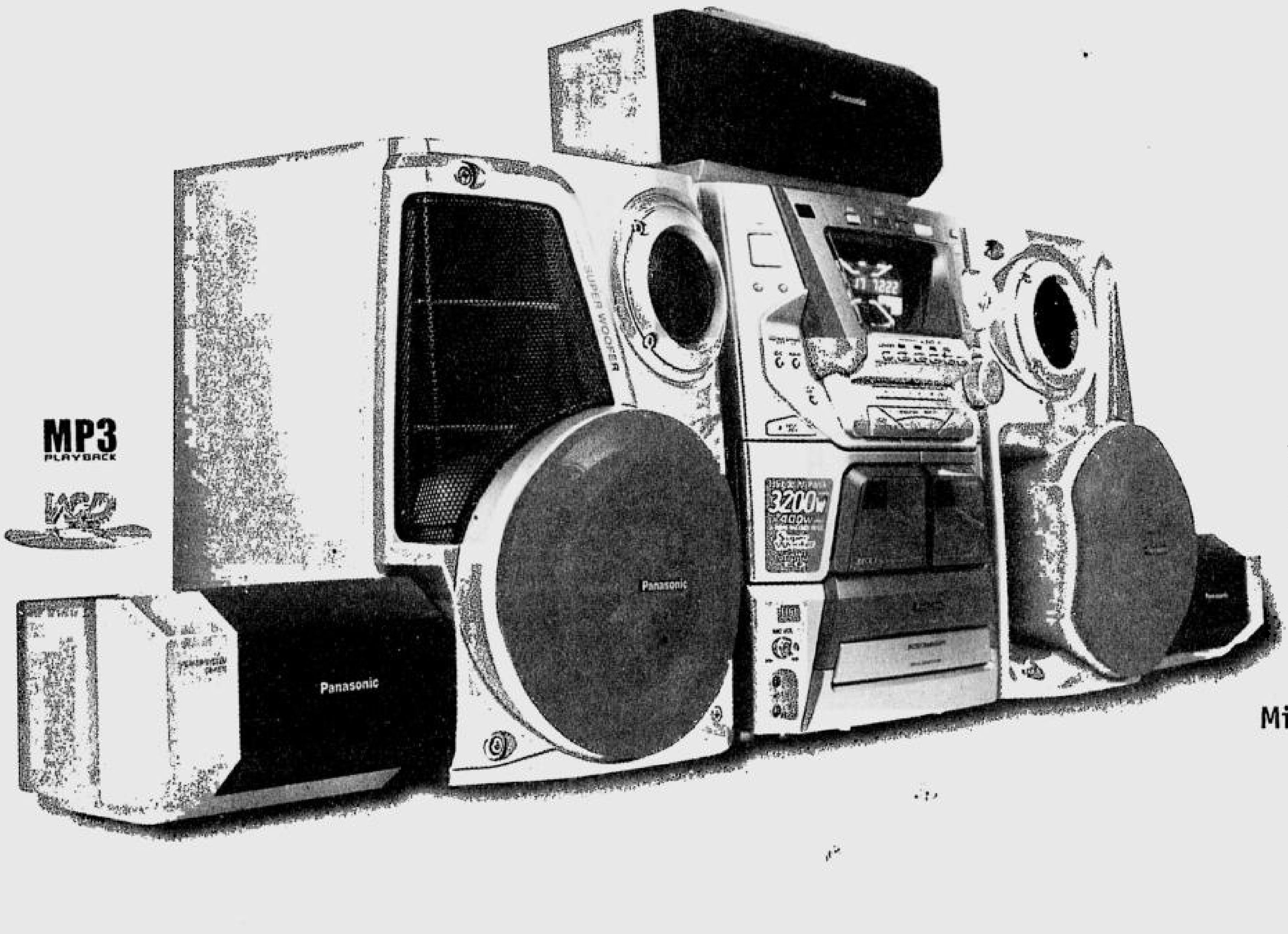
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Dark shadow

EDITORIAL

POPE John Paul II has taken the unusual step of directly addressing the scandal of sexual abuse committed by errant clergy through his traditional Holy Thursday "Letter to Priests."

"As priests, we are personally and profoundly afflicted by the sins of some of our brothers, who have betrayed the grace of Ordination," he wrote. He referred to the "grave scandal caused, with the result that a dark shadow of suspicion is cast over all the other fine priests who perform their ministry with honesty and integrity, and often with heroic self-sacrifice."

The Pope's letter may have been occasioned in part by the series of sex-abuse cases that have washed over the Catholic Church in the United States in recent months like an unwelcome tide. Just last week, the Pope accepted the resignation of a Florida bishop for sexually abusing a seminarian. Last month, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia announced the dismissal of "several" priests for the abuse of minors. The growing scandal prompted Archbishop John Foley, president of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Social Communications, to say: "It's a very dark day in the history of the Church in the United States."

As newspapers such as the Philadelphia Inquirer have reported, however, the problem is international in scope. Last January, the Catholic Church in Ireland agreed to pay $110 million to victims abused over several years by some 20 priests and seminarians. Similar sex-abuse cases have also been reported in England, France, Australia and other countries.

The influential Foley denounced the abuses as a "grave offense against God and a grave offense against God's children."

The head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Clergy, Cardinal Darío Castrillón Hoyos, also condemned the aberration, calling sexual abuse a "very serious crime." But in an effort to put the matter in perspective, he ended up being less categorical. Noting that a study by an American professor had estimated that 0.3 percent of the US clergy are pedophiles, the cardinal then argued: "There are still no detailed comparative statistics on other professions, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, teachers, athletes, journalists, politicians and other ordinary categories, including parents and relatives."

This is not a helpful argument—indeed it is a misleading one—because the priesthood is not a "comparative" profession. While any act of sexual abuse committed by a person in authority is an abomination, the impact of a sex-abuse scandal on the "other professions" is qualitatively different. Living a moral life is part of the responsibility of a teacher or a parent, but it is the *entire* responsibility of a priest, as an *alter Christus*.

It will not do, therefore, to imply that "other professions" may have a higher incidence of pedophilia or that the rising tide of sexual abuse is—as anecdotal evidence suggests it likely is—a worldwide phenomenon. These may be true, but they do not lessen the damage that unpriestly behavior leaves on the priesthood.

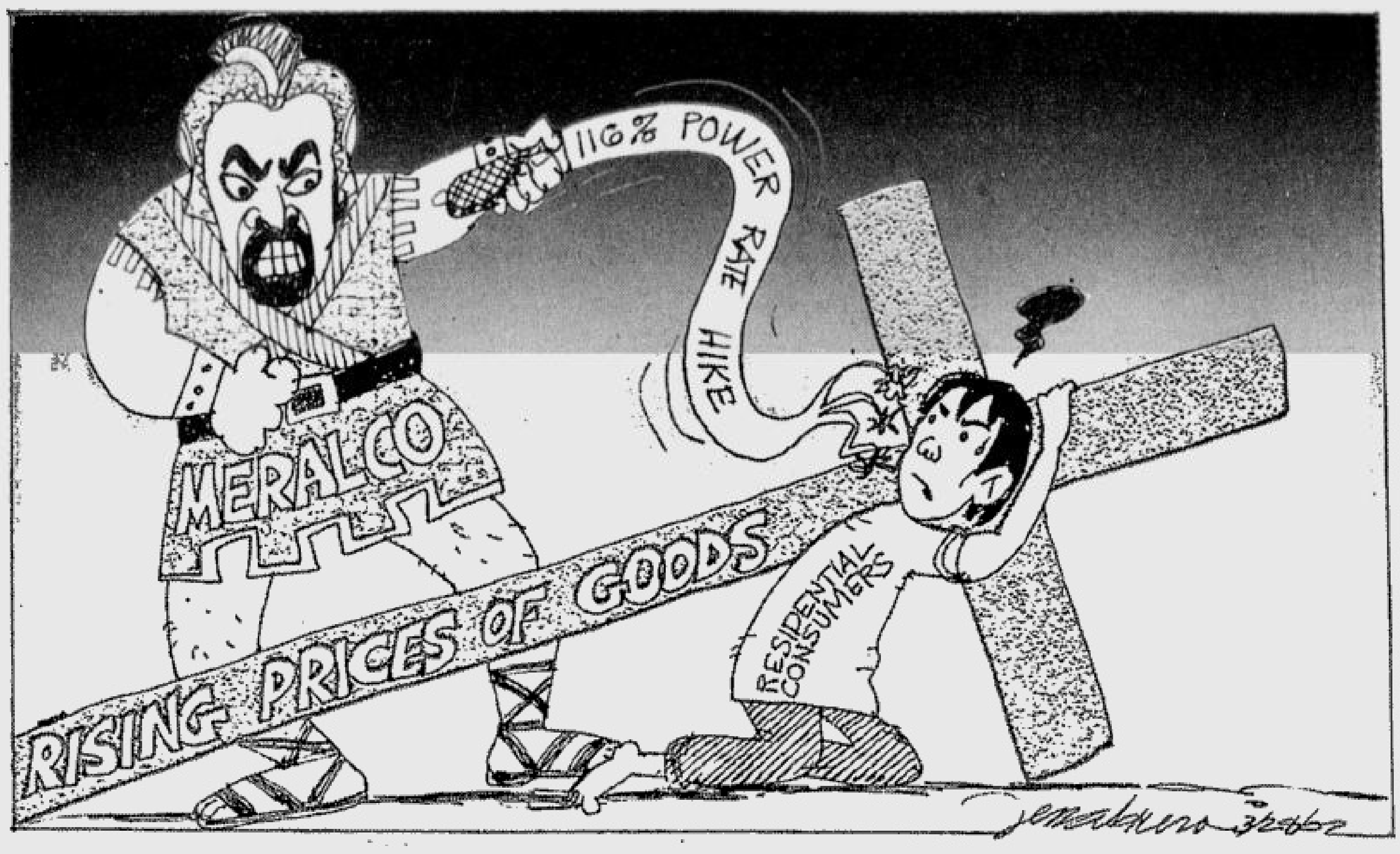
The Church and the clergy are and ought to be judged by higher standards.

In contrast, the Pope's Holy Thursday letter takes a measured look at the horror of sexual abuse.

Pope John Paul II expressed sorrow for the abuses and sympathy for the victims. "The Church shows her concern for the victims and strives to respond in truth and justice to each of these painful situations," he wrote. But he also appealed to priests, "conscious of human weakness, but trusting in the healing power of divine grace," to "commit ourselves more fully to the search for holiness."

His letter echoes a statement he made in his apostolic exhortation "Ecclesia in Oceania," where he spoke of sexual abuses as both "the cause of great suffering and spiritual damage for the victims" and the cause of "grave damage to the life of the Church." What makes the letter extraordinary is that he has used the occasion of the feast, the start of the holiest season in Christendom and the traditional anniversary of the Christian priesthood, to focus on the scandal.

We hope the letter leads to a sea change.



The truth about the RP cement industry

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE CEMENT cartel is running a series of full-page advertisements in almost all the newspapers, including the tabloids, to force the Tariff Commission (TA) to impose a P20-per bag protective tariff on imported cement. It has also unleashed its workers, led by a reputedly nationalist former congressman, to picket the commission offices and to harangue various news forums. The gist of the advertisements and placards is that the commission is killing the local cement industry. If the commission does not protect the local cement companies, the cartel claims, these companies would close shop and their workers laid off. Don't believe all that propaganda.

The cartel must have spent several millions of pesos for those advertisements and to finance the demonstrators. If they're really losing money, how can they afford them?

According to Philcemcor, the association of local cement companies, the industry dropped production and lost money because of the so-called "import surge." False.

In its investigation, the commission found out that from 1997 to 1999—even prior to the height of the "import surge" in 2000—Philcemcor members already mothballed a total of 20 cement kilns. In 2000 and 2001, an additional five kilns were mothballed. Thus, only 12 kilns out of 37 are currently operating. Hence, workers were laid off not because of the competition from imports but because the companies voluntarily closed two-thirds of their kilns to reduce production and raise prices.

Even at the height of the "import surge," the domestic industry's market share was 80 percent. It is now 89 percent. Thus, the domestic industry still dominates the industry. Even a decline in its market share does not constitute an impairment of its overall market position, since it has maintained its market dominance, the TC said.

Moreover, the group controlled by the three foreign cement giants now asking for protection did not really lose money. On the contrary, it earned P1.9 billion from operations last year. The companies that did not join the protectionist group sold P2.5 billion worth of cement in 1999. This increased to P3.3 billion in 2000.

The "losses," audited financial statements show, came from interest payments on loans from the three foreign giants.

Perhaps a little background is necessary. Beginning in 1998, five global cement corporations have acquired control in most of the local cement companies. They are Financiers Lafarge S.A. (Lafarge) of France; Blue Circle Industries, PLC (Blue Circle) of the United Kingdom; Cemex S.A. de C.V. (Cemex) of Mexico; and Holcim Ltd. (formerly Holderbank Financiers Glarin, Ltd., the Holderfin V.V.) of Switzerland. Lafarge totally acquired Blue Circle in July of 2001.

Lafarge is currently the world's largest cement conglomerate after its acquisition of rival Blue Circle. Cemex is the largest international cement trader in the world. Prior to the acquisition of Blue Circle by Lafarge, Holcim was the global leader in cement production.

Lafarge has control of seven domestic companies, Cemex of three, and Holcim of two. Thus, of the 17 cement manufacturers operating 20 plants all over the country, the three global giants control 12. Only five are not yet under their control. It is these 12 that applied for tariff protection.

It now turns out that the foreign giants did not even put in their own money to acquire the Philippine companies. The investments appear as loans from the foreign corporations. Thus, profits of the local subsidiaries were paid as interest on loans from Lafarge, Cemex and Holderbank (P5.1 billion last year). Instead of paying capital gains taxes to the Philippine government, these payments were listed as "losses."

The TC investigation showed that prior to the acquisitions, the interest payment of the 12 applicants for safeguards was only P993 million in 1997. This rose dramatically to P2.8 billion in 1998 when the four giants acquired almost 90 percent of the Philippine cement capacity. The interest payments further ballooned to P3.9 billion in 1999 and P5.1 billion in 2000. Most of the loans were incurred to acquire controlling interests in the domestic companies. As a result, the local cement industry was made to shoulder heavy interests on the gargantuan debt.

Before the foreign giants acquired the domestic cement companies, the price of cement was P45 per 40-kg bag. Since the acquisitions, the price steadily rose to almost P100 in 1999, to P120 in 2000 and to P136 in 2001. The current price is from P136 to P150 per bag.

It was because the price shot up in 2000 that the surge of lower-priced imports occurred. There would have been no surge had the domestic price not shot up. Imported cement was selling for only P86 per bag, why would Filipino consumers not buy it instead of the high-priced domestically produced cement of the international giants?

So the three largest cement producers in the world asked for protection against imports through a tariff barrier and import quotas.

The mystery is why the cement giants cannot sell here the cement mined and processed here with Filipino labor at prices at par with imported cement that have to be shipped here from across the seas. The reason is that the cement cartel is exporting the cement being sold so expensively here to other well-developed countries like the United States at very low prices. The cartel is getting back the losses from Filipino consumers, its hosts. The cartel accuses the Taiwan and Korean companies of "dumping" their cement here but it is also dumping our cement to other countries that can afford higher prices. ***(To be continued)***

* * *

KAPIHAN NOTES: In observance of the Holy Week, there will be no Kapihan sa Manila today. The next forum will be on April 1. Being April Fool's Day, we may have a very interesting personality as guest.

Whodunit

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE NATIONAL Anti-Crime Commission (NACC) doesn't know who's planting the bombs all over Metro Manila, but is willing to bet it is one nasty terrorist group, or groups. These groups include the usual suspects, which are the NPA and various Muslim organizations, and a new one called the Indigenous People's Federal Army, which it says has claimed responsibility for one of the bombs.

The NACC, which is headed by Hernando Perez, Roilo Golez and Joey Lina, the justice secretary, national security adviser and interior chief respectively, believes, according to an INQUIRER informant, that it is either an attempt by an organization with illusions of grandeur to advertise itself or a prelude to the anniversary of the May 1 riots.

The image that leaps to mind from all this is Alan Rickman in "Die Hard" rattling off his list of demands—while posing as a terrorist when all he really wants to do is rob a building—calling among others for the release of several members of the Asian Dawn. When one of his henchmen asks him silently what the Asian Dawn is, Rickman puts a hand on the phone and whispers, "I read about them in Time Magazine."

I do not know whether Perez or Golez or Lina, or anyone of the intelligence—there we go with that word again—officers of the AFP-PNP whispered cynically to one another, "I read about them in Time Magazine" when they mentioned the Indigenous People's Federal Army. But they should be congratulated for fortitude, for not rolling on the floor in a fit of uncontrollable laughter after uttering the name of that presumed scourge. "Ipma" sounds very much like "Ifma," the Integrated Forest Management Authority of the DENR. Maybe we should look for its inspiration there.

Does it take Sherlock Holmes to discover the brains behind the planting of bombs in Metro Manila? Bombs that turned out to be duds anyway? Who has the means, who has the opportunity, who has the motive?

Isn't it the weirdest thing in the world that these bombings, or bombing attempts, should happen at the very time the United States is requesting (that is the official word, though it is hard to see them waiting around for an answer) the Philippine government to allow a new wave of American troops to the Philippines? Isn't it the weirdest thing in the world that these bombings, or bombing attempts, should happen when the Macapagal administration is hard pressed to find an excuse to justify the presence of more American soldiers, let alone the ones already here? Isn't it the weirdest thing in the world that these bombings, or bombing attempts, should happen when the notion of "terrorist," like everything else in this country, has passed on from fearful threat to text joke?

But bombs are discovered in some parts of Metro Manila, and suddenly government no longer figures it needs to talk about the new round of deployment of American troops in this country. All it finds is a need to talk about is whether it should field secret marshals in Metro Manila or not. And, terror or terrors, the people who are now calling for this are the very ones who objected violently to Erap, Ramos, Cory and Marcos doing so on human rights grounds. How time flies, how greed destroys.

The recent deluge of American troops into this country represents a war game in one sense. Which is that they're playing a game with us: they're playing around with our heads. "They" are the American and Filipino officials, American officials coming in first because Filipino officials obviously are no longer in control of this country. All that is left for the Macapagal administration to do is to try to justify the unjustifiable.

What lengths they will go to do it, what lengths they will go to play around with the public's head, well, the (frustrated) bombings should suggest it. Why in Allah's name should any Muslim group, extremist or not, want to bomb installations in Metro Manila? They haven't had enough with American and Filipino forces turning their land into a howling wilderness? They haven't had enough dealing with anti-Muslim sentiments already stoked to fever pitch by their very own president? They want to invite a new wave of persecution?

There is only one group that can and wants to foment a state-of-siege mentality in Metro Manila. They are the people who want American troops in this country. They are the people who want renewed American military presence in this country. They are the people who want American bases in this country. They are the ones who have the power to do this. They are the ones who stand to profit from this. And they call their enemies terrorists.

Look what they've done to this country already. Half a year ago, all we had was a renegade Muslim group that had expanded its kidnapping activities to include foreigners. A group the AFP liked to play cat and mouse with, and to use like the "budget Huks," that is, as an excuse to jack up their budget. Now we have the American military turning this country into a laboratory for war, experimenting with weapons without care for their effects on this country and people. Now we have the rest of the world thinking this country has truly become another Afghanistan, or Bosnia, set afire in fraternal strife or civil war. Now we even are trying to delude ourselves we are in the grip of a blitzkrieg by terror squads in the capital and the only way to fight it is by importing more Rambos into this country.

To think that the one President who has done this was the one who never did anything to deserve to become President. To think that the people who are now helping her do this are those who once dreamt of making this country proud and free, peaceful and prosperous.

Ina ng bayan naman, maawa naman kayo sa bayan.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

RP came so close to the edge of financial ruin

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AT THE RECENT Consultative Group meeting at Clark, I found extremely interesting Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin's narration before the foreign donor community of the conditions that the Macapagal administration found when it assumed power in January 2001. To the best of my recollection, this was the first time the low-profile budget chief spoke of this. Boncodin listed two of President Macapagal's biggest challenges: "how to repair a very weak fiscal position and how to restore public confidence in the government." She narrated that by January 2001, the fiscal condition was "clearly out of control" because of a "deadly combination" during the Estrada years: a "record deficit-spending" arising from the pump-priming policy, amid "deteriorating tax effort." In other words, unbridled spending with no money being raised. Boncodin noted that this "deadly combination" succeeded in sharply eroding the confidence of the financial markets on the Estrada administration's ability to discipline itself and seriously impaired its credibility. Compounding it were the perceptions of "rampant graft and corruption, the widespread politicization of the bureaucracy and the resurgence of conflict in Mindanao and other areas."

* * *

Boncodin tried hard to paint a restrained picture of the fiscal position of the Estrada administration in the last weeks before his fall. But its desperation then may be gleaned from what Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas officials privately admit: that had the Estrada administration not fallen in January of 2001, within two months perhaps the Philippines might have gone into a debt default, an extremely serious situation among debtor nations. This was because no foreign deposits and investments were coming in at all. It seems we were very much on the road to becoming another Argentina had God not chosen to help us at Edsa Dos, according to Bangko Sentral officials.

* * *

Boncodin narrated that "with no time to lose," the new administration immediately adopted a fiscal program anchored on restoring discipline in the fiscal sector and over a year later, this fiscal discipline was winning plaudits from the foreign donors. The immediate task was to bring down the budget deficit, which had threatened to balloon to P225 billion or 5.8 percent of the Gross Domestic Product, to a target P145 billion in 2001 and P130 billion in 2002. This meant raising revenue collections from the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, which together accounts for 85 percent of total government revenues. Total revenue collections overshot target by P5.5 billion or one percent in the first year of this administration, but Boncodin noted that the biggest improvement came from "better-than-expected level of remittances to the Bureau of Treasury from dividends, interest and fees and charges imposed by various agencies of the national government."

* * *

The P354.9 billion tax collection by the BIR in Ms Macapagal's first year exceeded by P1.1 billion the year-to-date target of P352.8 billion and comprised 91 of the total collection for 2001. But as the Australian delegation at Clark pointed out in its thoughtful critique of the administration's poverty reduction program, while the government has been exerting "strong controls over spending to improve overall fiscal balances," a lot remains to be done to address the "underlying problem of poor revenue performance, especially in tax administration." Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho readily acknowledged the Australians' point and promised to improve revenue collection under President Macapagal.

* * *

Over the past months I have worked with photojournalist Mandy Navasero in a new foundation devoted exclusively to helping children from very poor families who are afflicted with stage I of a disease that answers to the acronym SSPE. A complication of the common measles (one good reason why anti-measles vaccine has to be pushed by government and civic organizations), the relatively unknown SSPE involves the rapid deterioration of the nervous system, with children and teenagers mostly from poor families being reduced in the later stages to a vegetable existence. Mandy put up the SSPE Foundation after being moved by the pathetic story of SSPE patient Jon-Jon Gutierrez, who remains under the care of the PGH neuro doctors. We in the SSPE Foundation decided that since children in stage I have the best chance to recover and we still have very limited resources, we would concentrate on helping stage I patients through the purchase of expensive medicines. Seventeen-year-old Benjamin Raypon of San Pedro, Laguna, became our first beneficiary. We hope to be closely coordinating with Dr. Aida Salonga who heads the PGH neuro department.

* * *

But every summer Mandy is also known for her photography workshops that she has offered to students of all ages for years now. Mandy, who trained abroad, offers basic photography in black and white for seven weeks to hobbyists 10 years old and above, who need to have their own 35 mm camera with interchangeable lenses. This course includes actual shootings in Metro Manila and out-of-town from April to May. A second course she is offering beginning April 6 is advanced photography, which prepares students for advertising and fine arts photography through workshops in such topics as portraiture, fashion and glamour, architectural, travel and food. Registration fee for seven weeks is P15,000. For inquiries call Mandy at 522-1905, 522-5185 or 522-5189, or cell phone 0916-306-0841.

Contrasts

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

THOSE were very interesting pictures on the front page of two separate issues of the INQUIRER. Mentally laid out side by side, they spoke not only a thousand words, but of entire worlds apart although both have to do with women.

The photo published earlier showed women who participated in the Women's Day rally in Manila against the Balikatan exercises, five of them posing all in a row displaying their leg-o'-ham, arms painted with the message "I love Bush," and as if taking a cue from a soap advertisement *(kahit ang taba-taba ko, maganda naman ang mukha, o, di ba?)*, they covered their faces with identical life-size photos of the bright smiling face of Ate Glo.

Second, the picture that appeared a few days later, given prominence at the very center of the front page were two Muslim women of Campo Uno in Basilán, intently watching American paramedics attending to residents during a medical mission.

The ralliers wanted the American troops out; the women of Basilan wanted them to stay, presumably for as long as needed, both with their own valid reasons for their sentiments.

The well-fed merry women with painted arms were residents of the country's seat of policy and decision-making. The women of Campo Uno, lean and serious, represented women in the areas of conflict, Mindanao specifically.

And the contrast doesn't end there.

That women are the most pitiful victims in any area of conflict is almost a given. In a war, they not only get killed, they are also raped and mutilated. Otherwise they are the ones who fight for space in the evacuation centers, who have to see to it that the food, whenever available, is equally shared. Often the woman, the wife and mother, is the one who must go hungry if the food is not enough.

Their men deprived of their means of livelihood, these women have to scrounge for provisions. Even sanitary napkins are a luxury they often cannot afford to worry about.

It goes without saying, of course, that if a child gets sick in an evacuation center, the mother must stay up the night, in her vigil her tortured mind hoping that the fever will go down even with the help of just the leaves and roots that she managed to find in the forest.

From day to day her very life is exposed to danger, because in the areas of conflict, especially when the military is conducting an operation in her locality, all males are suspects and she would rather run errands than be a widow searching for the remains of her husband in the jungle.

From dawn to dusk, she must always be up to attend to her family. She hardly has time to think of herself, much less of such things as nationalism.

She doesn't even know what that means, because the parameters of her universe are defined only by, first, her family and then her community.

And this universe does not include even such ideas as "self-determination" or "independence" that certain groups, people of her own kind, are fighting for. Whatever these mean, all she knows is that nobody is fighting for her. She can't even understand why she and her family must suffer this way through no fault of their own.

And just when she has become desperate with hopelessness, the *"milikan"* arrive, and miraculously, she somehow feels that soon, all this would come to an end. For the first time since she could remember, she feels safe and that is what matters.

She could even dare to wonder when they could return to what remained of their house, and maybe, her children could even go back to school.

At this point my thoughts go back to the women in that other picture, demanding the eviction of the *"Kano"* for the potential dangers they pose to Filipino womanhood, and wonder how come not a single rally was held to protest the present and real danger to the women such as those of Campo Uno as the Philippine military pursued the Abu Sayyaf and their kind elsewhere in Mindanao.

Not a single word of emphasis was shared as they grieved and mourned. As they were being raped and killed, the silence was as deafening as the bombs that exploded in the stillness of the jungles.

As they were starving to death, other women were worrying whether the frozen imported meat they purchased was fresh as the day it was cut from the carcass. As they were vainly trying to keep their children in whatever state they could find in the refugee center, other mothers elsewhere were busy trimming their garden hedges.

But then, maybe the matter of survival is not as high a cost as nationalism and the expected rise of prostitution.

So if somebody told the women of Basilan that women who had never seen a single Abu Sayyaf in their lives, much less suffered the loss of a kidnapped or beheaded relative, or even went hungry not because of a voluntary diet, but because of scarcity of food, wanted the Americans to leave, what would they say? I leave it to your imagination.

Anyway, on this women's month, to the women of Basilan: May you live long enough to return to your homes, to listen to the cricket at dusk and not to the sound of guns; to walk through the woods and partake of nature's bounty and not to search for bones or rotting flesh; to watch your children grow and not to wonder whether they will last through the night, and maybe long enough to tell your grandchildren how the Americans made all that possible.

South Africa, here we come

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

I KNOW now why people in the education establishment cannot bear to discuss something called "TIMSS" with me for any length of time, without staring off in whichever direction the Department of Education happens to be, sometimes muttering angrily to themselves.

TIMSS, the acronym, stands for Third International Mathematics and Science Study, which has been described as the largest and most comprehensive study of student competence in these fields ever conducted in the world. The study was funded by the US Department of Education, the National Science Foundation, the Canadian government, the World Bank and other participating nations, states, consortia and districts, which conducted it in 1995 and again in 1999.

In 1999, more than half a million eighth grade students from 38 countries, including 6,000 randomly selected from Philippine schools, participated in standardized tests designed to gauge their knowledge of mathematics and science subjects. In each area, a perfect score of 800, or near it, identified some real "beautiful minds" among the students participating.

In math, Singapore soared to first with an average score of 604, followed by Korea (587), Taiwan (585), Hong Kong (582) and Japan (579). Just above the overall average score of 487 were countries like Australia (525), Malaysia (519) and the United States (502). In science, the top scorers were, in order, Taiwan, Singapore, Hungary, Japan, Korea.

But our results were a devastating blow to Filipino institutional pride, a kick in the teeth, akin to the first time a kid gets a flat-out zero on a final exam. Bringing up the rear, the Philippines came in third from the bottom (345) in both math and science, with that fine gradation in cellar status being lost in the company of its other abject dwellers—hashish-eating Morocco (337) and apartheid-addled South Africa (275). Only the top one percent of students from these countries scratched the underside of the international average in the statistically controlled tests (very much like a Social Weather Stations survey but with more significant statistics and with really tough questions where opinion is worthless and only correct answers count).

Together, these three countries get bottom-billing at every one of the hundreds of websites from the different countries that have been conducting the TIMSS postmortem to see what's wrong with their own education systems. Even those countries at the top of the TIMSS seem to be vaguely dissatisfied with their performance. (I'm sure that attitude is partly why they are on top.) The database is of course open to the global investment and financial communities, with all that implies.

TIMSS represents a massive scientific probe into the actual state of math and science education around the world. It has taken all this time to satisfactorily digest the data and distill its lessons, some of which are especially relevant to us, as in, the handwriting is on the wall.

For example, on the matter of curriculum, it has been noted by many analysts of the TIMSS database and its follow-on survey of the participants, that the most successful countries have curricula with very few subjects, tightly focused on the high-value areas of science, mathematics and language, uncluttered by a plethora of disjointed subjects, and highly selective in their targets for allocating the scarce resource of classroom time. Everyone readily admits that the Philippine curriculum has suffered from all these ills and its teachers, ill-treated.

In this light, I now see the heart of the problem in the DepEd's recent moves on the public school curriculum. Officially there are only five subjects in public school now: math, science, English, Filipino and something called Makabayan. This neat hat trick seems to bring us in line with "international consensus recommendations" that curricula be pruned of unnecessary foliage. But when you look closely, there are no less than a dozen discernible subjects tucked neatly within four separate "experiential learning areas" in the Makabayan package of the DepEd's much-lamented new Basic Education Curriculum to be piloted this year.

So, all the clutter may still be there, badly hidden in that Makabayan area, staunchly ringed by all sorts of fortifications from special interests, from the nationalist to the quasi-religious, some valid, some ridiculous. What is really being protected may be the social welfare program for election-time workers that the public school system has become.

On top of it all, the new curriculum has no science subjects at all prescribed in Grades 1 and 2 of elementary school, and high school science time will be reduced from 80 minutes to 60 minutes per day. The increase in math time from 40 to 60 minutes does not make up for the reductions in biology, chemistry, physics and earth science. It only makes up for the miserly allocation of 40 minutes given to math in the first place.

The new curriculum does not truly implement the consensus reforms of the international education community for streamlined, focused curricula, with increased concentration on math and science content. We are moving in the opposite direction instead. What will happen at TIMSS 2003? South Africa, move over, here we come.

* * *

Comments to deanjbocobo@yahoo.com

Subliminal message of PDI photos

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

NEWSPAPERS would be dull reading if they were all text or written material. That's why photos are published with the news reports to break the monotony of black ink.

Pictures speak a thousand words, so the saying goes. The reader can interpret the photos whichever way he wants depending on his cultural background, educational attainment or his mood at the time he picked up the newspaper.

Given a choice between color and black and white photos, the editors will always go for the former, except that financial reasons (color photos are more expensive) may discourage them from doing so.

For the INQUIRER, color photos on the front page are standard fare unless the only pictures available to accompany the important news of the day are in black and white.

The March 18 issue of the newspaper carried the photo of two American paramedics examining patients while two Filipino women watched. The photo caption reads: "Two awestruck women watch American paramedics S/Sgt. David Christensen and S/Sgt. Mark Godfrey examine patients during a medical mission inside Philippine Army headquarters in Campo Uno in Lamitan, Basilan."

A reader, Rosario Billano, found something wrong with the caption. She wrote: "I don't know who wrote the caption, but I doubt if he/she knows the meaning of awestruck. Curious, concerned maybe, but awestruck? If you examine the picture, the eyes of the women were not even focused on the two Americans. Awestruck? My foot!"

Bad light

"Several weeks ago, you also pictured a Filipino soldier carrying a can of water and an American soldier lounging in his bunk. What is the subliminal message? While the Pinoy soldier does menial tasks, like fetching water, the *Kano* soldier *ay pahiga-higa lang*.

"Another picture was that of a Pinoy soldier, making do with a hammock for sleeping while an American soldier has a real bed with a mattress and mosquito netting.

"My perception is that the INQUIRER is trying to put the American soldiers in a bad light. I know you are against the presence of American soldiers in Mindanao. Hey, but so am I. But this does not excuse us from being fair and factual.

"It is not the American soldier's fault that the Filipino soldier is so ill-trained and ill-equipped. The INQUIRER should instead focus on who should be blamed for the sorry state of our soldiers instead of sending these unfair subliminal messages.

"If the INQUIRER really has the right motive in showing the plight of the Pinoy soldier, it should…show the pictures of the generals' mansions, their children's flashy cars and, yes, their wives' jewelry and how small their legitimate salaries really are to maintain these.

"The INQUIRER should be more careful. Whether purposely or not, its pictures and captions send powerful messages."

Contrast

Let's first take up the reader's claim that the INQUIRER had something up in its sleeves when it published the contrasting photos of Filipino and American soldiers.

The editor in chief denied that the newspaper was engaged in a subliminal campaign against the presence of American soldiers in the country. There was no hidden agenda in the two photos mentioned.

She explained that the pictures were published to show the glaring contrast between the ill-equipped Filipino soldier and his American counterpart. While the former had to make do with whatever facilities were available around him, the needs of the GI was properly attended to by the US government. The difference in the way the two governments treated their soldiers was stark and embarrassing.

She further said that the photos told the story like it is. They were not meant to put the American troopers in an unfavorable light to reinforce what the reader perceived to be the INQUIRER's stand against their presence in Mindanao.

On the matter of the reader's suggestion for the newspaper to focus its attention on the misuse of the military funds by the top brass, the editor in chief remarked that the INQUIRER has published many reports in the past exposing the sorry state of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

She emphasized that the photos the reader had taken offense at are but bits and pieces of the total picture of the true state of our military. The contrasts shown in the pictures drew, in a way, the kind of reaction that the newspaper wanted to elicit from the public about the poor treatment of the Filipino soldiers by their leaders.

Evaluation

I examined closely the photo in question to check the merit of the reader's commit. She is right. The two women had the look of curiosity in their faces, rather than being awestruck. Their eyes were not opened wide or their mouths agape to show their amazement at what the two paramedics were doing.

With their heads resting on their hands and their eyes looking intently at what was happening before them, awestruck is not an accurate description of their reaction to the medical treatment they were in fact observing.

Thus, apologies are in order for the wrong choice of word. Mea culpa.

On the matter of the alleged hidden agenda of the INQUIRER on the contrasting photos, I share the editor in chief's position that the photos should not be interpreted as an indirect effort of the newspaper to stir up bias against the American soldiers.

The photos have to be taken at their face value, that is, to show how the Filipino soldiers compare poorly with their American brothers-in-arms in terms of basic field necessities. It's something that cannot be denied. It is not as if it is a military secret.

The heads of the executive and legislative departments of the country have repeatedly acknowledged that our soldiers are sorely lacking in logistics and fighting equipment. What keeps them going, in spite of the inadequacies, is simply morale and love for the profession they have sworn to give their life for.

The truth hurts. But it just has to be said and the photos in question showed it without need of much explanation.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Suspicious provision in bill creating the Department of Housing

THE GOVERNMENT is fast-tracking the passage of a bill creating a Department of Housing and Urban Development. The bill, certified as urgent by the President, has gone past the committee level in the House of Representatives and is up for floor deliberations in April. Various groups have registered strong opposition to the bill. However, a dangerous aspect of the bill has largely escaped public attention.

Chapter VII or Section 34 of the bill identifies lands that shall be zoned automatically for non-agricultural uses. These include: (1) all lands in all cities; (2) all lands in first- and second-class municipalities with a population density of at least 500 persons per square kilometer; and (3) all privately owned striplands along national roads, provincial roads and municipal roads. The chapter further enumerates other lands that may be designated and zoned by local government units (LGUs) for residential and other urban purposes: (1) all lands in first- and second-class municipalities with a population density of less than 500 persons per square kilometer, to the extent of 10 percent of the total agricultural area; (2) all lands in third-class municipalities to the extent of 10 percent of the total agricultural area; and (3) all lands in fourth to sixth-class municipalities except lands already duly awarded under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

Section 34 of the housing bill is tantamount to automatic reclassification and conversion. With the Philippines being a predominantly agricultural country, there are many cases of cities still having prime agricultural lands. As listed above, the bill will virtually open up all agricultural lands (a total of 10.8 million hectares including prime agricultural lands) to land conversion without regard to actual and existing uses.

Even irrigated or irrigable lands could be converted, putting to waste the millions of pesos the government has invested in irrigation projects. Even agricultural lands distributed or in the pipeline for distribution, under CARP can be converted, if these lands have been designated in the bill or zoned by LGUs for housing and urban use.

If these provisions will not be deleted and the bill becomes a law, this measure, instead of becoming a centerpiece program for housing and urban development, will only aggravate the existing confusion on the country's fragmented land use policies at great social costs. It will hasten the diminution of prime agricultural lands, gravely endangering the country's food security, trigger exemptions from CARP coverage, result in massive displacement of farmers and farmworkers from their lands, and as a consequence, lead to large-scale urbanization.

And what is the seeming rationale for all the conversions? So that there would be more lands available for building houses for the poor. But the question is, does housing and urban development require so much land to justify automatic conversion and declassification? More importantly, does the problem on housing stem from the lack of land for housing? Thousands of housing units remain empty because their price remain unreachable to the poor, the housing projects are inaccessible to the poor's sources of livelihood and these areas lack basic services.

So, for whom really is Section 34 of the housing bill? Definitely not for the urban poor.

The creation of a Department of Housing is meant to address the concerns of the urban poor, which comprised the bulk of those who marched to Malacañang last May 1. Yet they had no part in the drafting of the bill, nor was the peasant sector, which would be adversely affected by Section 34 of the bill, consulted.

Maybe next May 1, the urban poor and the peasants should march together to Malacañang.

—LIA JASMIN M. ESQUILLO, policy officer, Kaisahan tungo sa Kaunlaran ng Kanayunan at Repormang Pansakahan, 3 Mahabagin St., Teachers' Village West, Quezon City

Having a good time at Nayong Pilipino

I VISITED Nayong Pilipino last March 10. We would have gone to Subic or Batangas, but due to some constraints, we opted for a place within Manila.

It had been a long while since I was there (on a Grade 3 or 4 field trip) and I appreciated the fact that I was able to have a pleasant, enjoyable, relaxing day with the family, thanks to the overall ambiance of the park.

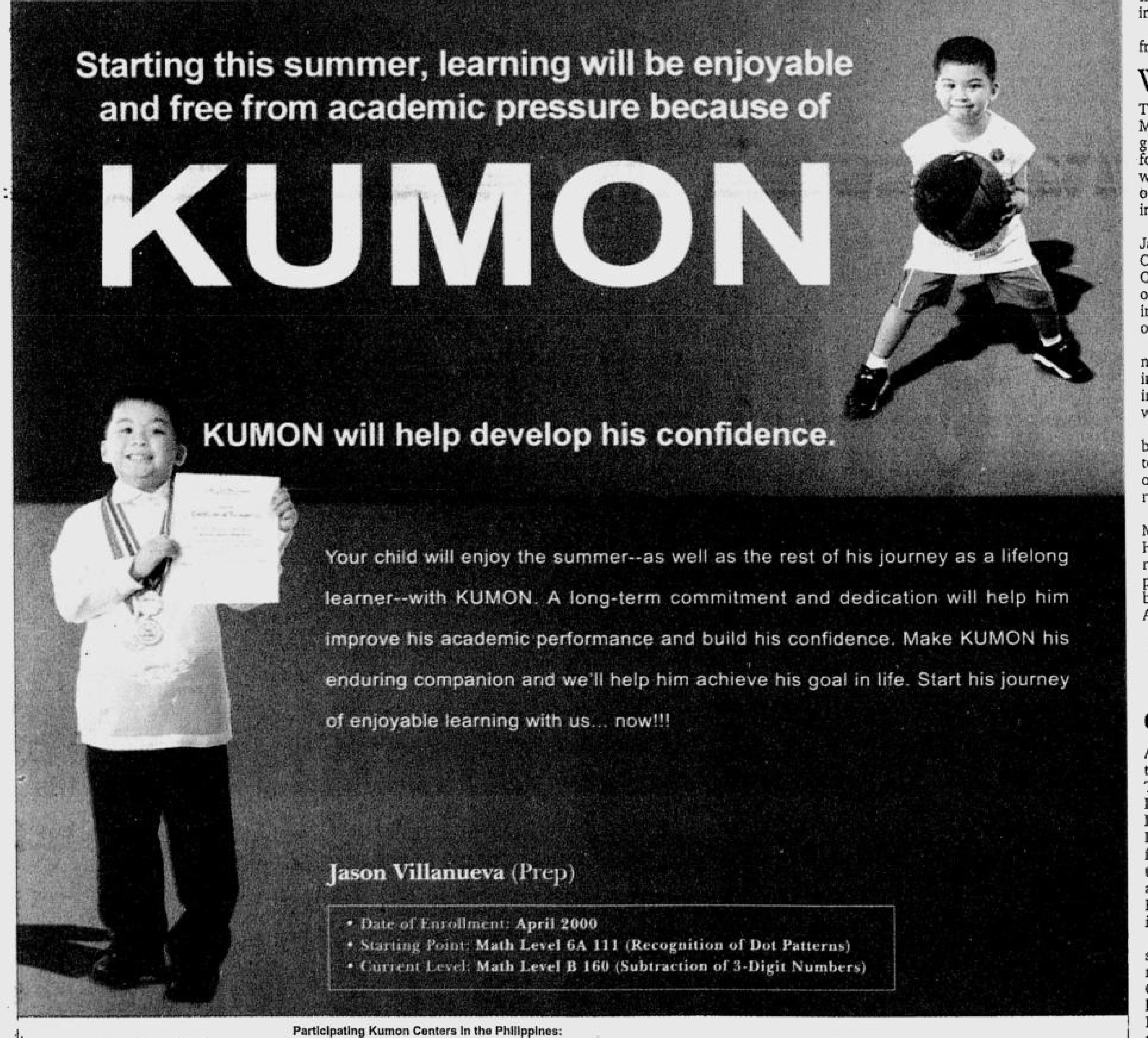
The efforts of the staff were commendable—from the polite jeepney drivers to the discreet picnic table caretakers. The rest rooms and the surroundings were clean enough. My sister and I were impressed by the fact that we spent just P75 on entrance fees (P15 each for five adults) and P20 for the picnic table, and we had the entire day to either sit on the grass and read, play badminton (the younger ones made friends with a couple of kids in the process) or stroll in the park. In the afternoon, there was a cultural dance show for free!

I think one of the more impressive things about Nayong Pilipino is that aside from tourists, there were entire families and even *barkadas* going there and having the "quality" time that maybe they would never get from walking through a mall or playing a computer game. There were quite a lot of people, but because the place was wide and spacious and had lots of shade, it was cozy and intimate enough.

Maybe we went there at a perfect time, when the wind was nice and breezy and the sun wasn't too hot and there wasn't a crowd of picnickers, but I still find it sad to hear that a part of it will be taken over by the airport. Sad, precisely since we really need these few places that are so accessible to everyone to encourage family togetherness and to give them the opportunity to relax in a clean and dignified way.

I hope that the changes in Nayong Pilipino will not be a reduction of its size but an improvement in the park's maintenance.

—LOREEN ANNE DE GUZMAN



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Fax: (02) 885 - 0251
E-mail Address: inquiries@kumon.com.ph
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Why Nayong Pilipino has to go

WE wish to clarify some issues raised by Neal Cruz in his column last March 6, 2002.

The 8.6 hectares of the Nayong Pilipino property is needed by the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) so that the government can comply with its obligations under its concession contract with Piatco for the construction of Terminal 3. The area will be used as an additional taxiway and for an access road to link Terminals 2 and 3.

Contrary to what Cruz said in his column, the MIAA believes that the Nayong Pilipino property is the ideal location for the International Cargo Terminal (ICT). Cruz may have been misinformed on the ICT facility project envisioned by the MIAA. This is not the same as the cargo facility for passenger baggage which Terminal 3 will provide. The international cargo facility envisioned will cater to transit cargoes and cargoes for consignees. Also, the travel time from Terminal 3 to the Nayong Pilipino location, should the ICT be located there, falls within internationally accepted standards. The other sites mentioned by Cruz as possible locations are not feasible due to size constraints.

Also, Cruz may have been misinformed as to why the runway has to be closed from time to time. This is so because the MIAA is currently undertaking the rehabilitation of the runway which has long been delayed. This project requires the closure of the runway from 11:30 p.m. to 5:30 a.m. the following day. It is scheduled to be completed by June this year.

To put matters in the proper perspective, we wish to clarify the MIAA's position on the Nayong Pilipino issue. The issue, we believe, is a matter to be resolved by affected agencies of the government. We believe there is a win-win solution to this. A consensus should be reached as to what direction the government will take. If the direction is to preserve Nayong Pilipino, so be it. What the MIAA wishes for the government to consider is the loss of opportunity for the Philippines to be more competitive globally as far as cargo servicing needs are concerned.

Without government support, Manila ranks among the top 50 cargo providers in the world: The MIAA sees a vast potential in the development of the proposed ICT.

Let history therefore be the judge. As far as Nayong Pilipino is concerned, the plan is to replicate the theme park affected by the 8.6 hectares within the same area. Since replication is to be done anyway, why not replicate it in another area more suitable for tourism, like the area on Roxas Boulevard being developed by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp.?

—EDGARDO C. MANDA, general manager, Manila International Airport Authority, Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Manila

Completely unconnected

THIS refers to the item in the Cocktales column last March 20, 2002, which discussed at some length the case of Bulletin Today. At some point, reference was made to the fact that lawyer Adolfo Azcuna who is Emilio Yap's counsel, was my partner and that I am now the chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government.

For the record, since Bulletin Today was a retainer of my former law office, I completely inhibited myself from Bulletin-related cases and had no intervention or participation whatsoever in the same.

I have similarly refrained from participation in all PCGG cases where the parties were either retainers or clients of my former law office or corporations or entities controlled by or related to such retainers and clients.

—HAYDEE B. YORAC, chair, Presidential Commission on Good Government, IRC Bldg., 82 Edsa, Mandaluyong City

Where is Gov. Hussin?

THE EMPLOYEES of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao can only hope that our new governor, Dr. Parouk Hussin, is not like the former governor of the ARMM, Nur Misuari, whose predicament now could partly be blamed on his perennial absence from office during his incumbency.

Since Hussin sat as governor of the region on Jan. 5, 2002, he has not stayed long at the old Office of the Regional Governor (ORG) in Cotabato City to attend to the needs of his subordinates in all of the devolved agencies operating under the umbrella of the ARMM executive office.

The Regional Legislative Assembly, the lawmaking body of the region, is now contemplating to pass a resolution calling on Hussin to stay in Cotabato City and hold office at the ORG, which is located in the city.

Employees of the ARMM have, since January, been wishing to have a dialogue with Hussin to tell him of the problems besetting our respective offices. Unfortunately, we don't know how to reach him whenever he is out of the ORG.

It is not too late yet. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo should act on the absences of Hussin from his office quickly. Our new governor ran under the administration party and was personally anointed as administration candidate by the President during the Nov. 26, 2001 ARMM elections.

—RAYMUNDO K. PELAEZ, Bureau of Public Information, Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, ARMM Compound, Cotabato City, r_k_pelaez@yahoo.com

Out of this world

AN OTHERWISE beautiful and promising day turns into a depressing one whenever I catch on TV or hear on radio the gang of Raymond Fortun, Crispin Remulla, Rene Saguisag, JV Ejercito, Jose Flaminiano, Butz Aquino and Didagen Dilangalen, among other defenders of former President Joseph Estrada, mouthing their tired lines about the so-called oppression and injustice allegedly being suffered by Estrada in the hands of the Macapagal administration and our courts.

As an ordinary citizen, may I ask: Is it oppression when one is detained at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center instead of the Quezon City Jail? Is it oppression when a detainee is allowed access to the print and broadcast media? Is it oppression when one is granted a medical pass to have the detainee's eye treated at a first-class eye treatment facility? Is it oppression when one is allowed regular visits from legal counsels, family, relatives and friends? Mr. Fortun and company, what planet are you from?

—FERDIE T. SIBAL, 18 Green Leaves St., Capitol Green Village, Tandang Sora, Quezon City

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Pope softens stand on euthanasia

Tells doctors keeping the terminally ill alive at all costs does not respect patient

VATICAN CITY—Pope John Paul II told a group of doctors Saturday that resorting to extreme measures to try to keep alive the terminally ill at all costs does not respect the patient.

John Paul was addressing participants from a scientific congress on gastroenterology, a branch of medicine studying diseases of the stomach and the intestines.

The Pontiff has familiarity with specialists from that field. Ten years ago, the Pope had surgery to remove a bowel tumor his doctors said was close to turning cancerous.

While encouraging scientists to pursue research for new treatments, John Paul told his audience, "Certainly one cannot forget that man is a limited and mortal being."

"It's thus necessary to approach the ill with that healthy realism which avoids generating in those who suffer the illusion of medicine's omnipotence," the pontiff said. "There are limits, which cannot be humanly overcome."

Telling the doctors that caring for patients "must take into the account not only the body but also the spirit," John Paul said it was "presumptuous" to count just on scientific technique.

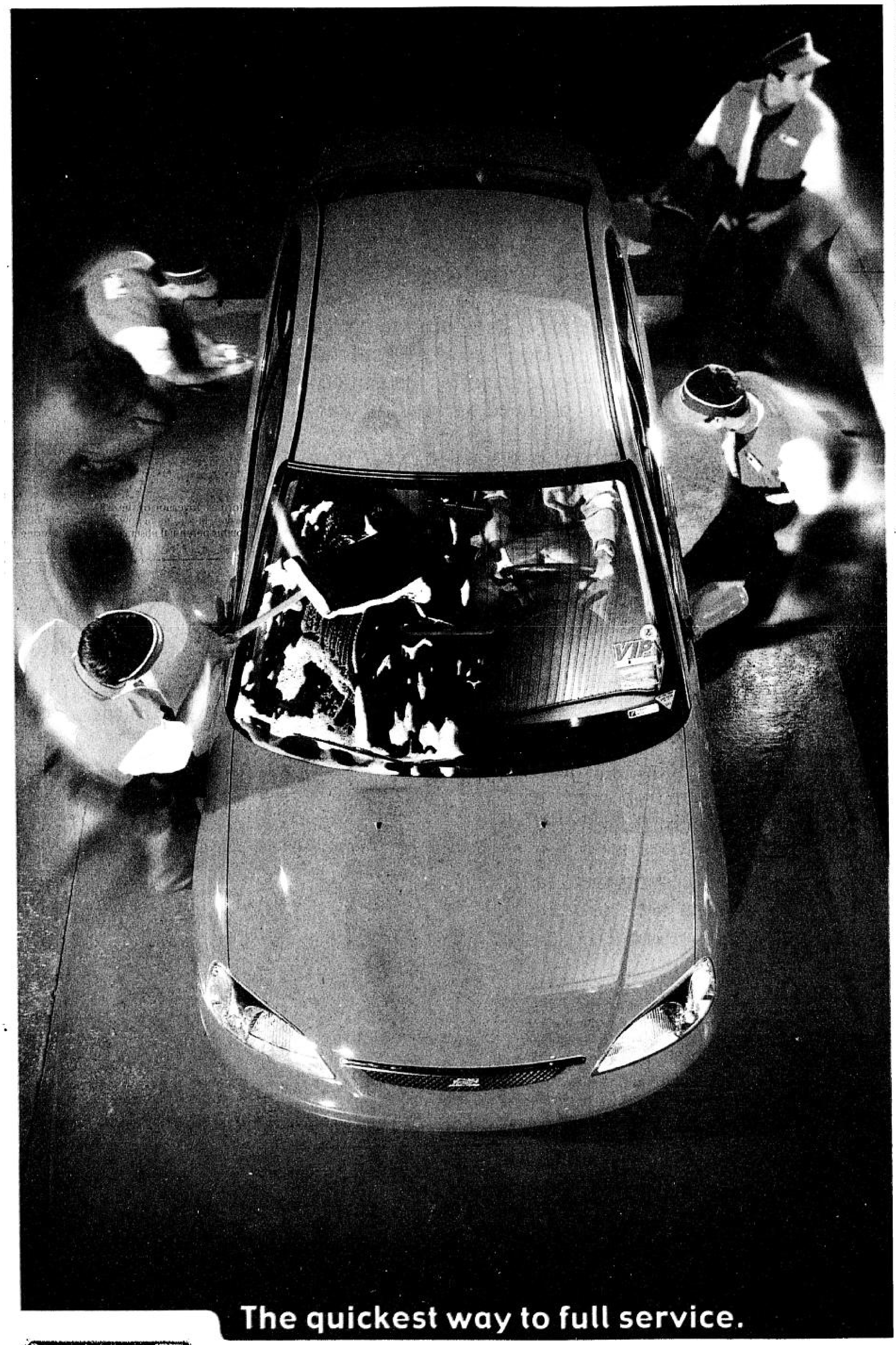
"And, in this perspective, extreme measures at all costs, even with the best intentions, would be, in the end, not only useless, but not fully respectful of the patient who has reached the terminal stage," the pontiff said.

John Paul, 81, who suffers from several ailments, has often shown much empathy with the ill.

His activities have been largely hampered by symptoms of Parkinson's disease, including a hand tremor and frequently slurred speech, and Vatican officials have blamed persistent knee pain for the recent cancellation of several public appearances on the Pope's busy schedule.

John Paul praised gastroenterologists' efforts to encourage good health through their recommendations of healthy daily habits and preventative, periodic medical examinations.

An editorial Saturday in the Vatican's newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, said euthanasia "is not a human right proclaimed in the charters of states or in the declarations of international organizations. It is, in a proper and realistic sense, a crime, a crime against life." *AP*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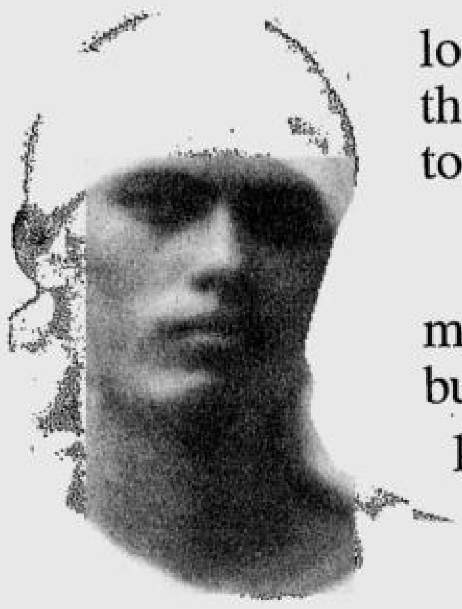
An appeal to Sec. Mar Roxas

from the contractors, suppliers and service providers of the local cement industry



We are contractors, suppliers and service providers dealing directly with local cement manufacturing plants. Our businesses are closely linked with these plants, and any disruption of their operations will adversely affect us, not to mention our workers and employees.

At the moment, it is not only disruption in operations of the local cement manufacturing plants that stares us in the face, but the possible cessation of business of these plants because of the denial by the Tariff Commission of the petition for safeguards sought by the local cement industry against the surge of imports. Such an eventuality could be fatal to our businesses too.

We deplore the insensitivity and the clear bias towards the importers of the TC position, which is certain to affect all local industries and products.

We find it very absurd that the TC glossed over the fact that stability in supply and prices of a commodity, particularly cement, could only be ensured if we have a capability to produce our own, rather than relying on imports and subjecting ourselves to the vagaries of the foreign market.

We should learn our lessons. Government allowed cheap and substandard steel imports to kill our local steel industry. Now we are totally dependent on steel imports, the prices of which skyrocketed after the competition from the local steel industry has been completely eliminated. This is certain to be the direction of the situation in cement if the TC is allowed to have its way.

Thus we appeal to Secretary Mar Roxas of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to disregard the recommendations of the TC, and uphold his own findings last year that led to his imposition of a provisional tariff on imported cement. The imposition of safeguard to the local cement industry, anyway, does not eliminate importation. It merely provides for a level playing field, for fairer competition between local products and imports.

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We are confident of the wisdom and sense of fairness of Secretary Roxas, and more confident still of his commitment to national interest.

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
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At right, Trade Secretary Mar Roxas assures former Senator Bobby Tanada of the Fair Trade Alliance of fair government decision on the application of the cement industry for safeguards. The FTA, various workers' group and civil society organizations rallied in front of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) recently calling on government to defend local industries from the flood of imported and smuggled products. Above, a cement worker holding an empty cement bag, indicating an empty future should goverment fails to act on his plight.

Joseph Li, president, Bearing Center and Machinery; **Jack Tan,** president, BUSSBAR CORP., **Cristopher Pastrana,** CEO, CAPP Industries; **Adriano Icasas,** vice president, Cembag Plastic Industrial; **Romy Mendoza,** president, Electro Automech Exponent; **Friedhelm Menzel,** CEO, Eucomtek Industry, Inc.; **Juan Arnel Mondonedo,** president and COO, Fuel and Raw Materials Corp., **Herbert Liu,** general manager, Golden Harvest Construction Supply, Inc., **Ronnie Javier,** vice president and general manager, Linkaco Industries; **Cynthia Amoyo,** vice president, Platinum International Supply; **Antonio Jorolan,** president, Refratrade Industrial Resources; **Antonio Chua**, president, Ricton Trading; **Joel Pe,** general manager, Silicon Valley; **Norma Arellano,** president, Wiseman Automation;

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Al-Qaida can still undertake terrorism, US says

ISLAMABAD—Despite battlefield losses suffered against US-led forces in Afghanistan, the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden remains capable of carrying out terrorist acts, a US military spokesperson said Sunday.

Navy Cmdr. Frank Merriman, a US Central Command spokesperson, said the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan has scored significant victories against al-Qaida but that the global terrorist organization is far from being wiped out. Pockets of enemy fighters are believed to be hiding in Afghanistan and Pakistan, waiting for the right moment to strike.

"Central Command would never say al-Qaida and the Taliban have lost their effectiveness," Merriman said. "They are a worldwide organization. There very well may be other terrorist acts in the planning process, and our goal is to try to disturb and eliminate as many of those as we can." *AP*

Israeli woman shot dead

JERUSALEM—Palestinian militants shot dead an Israeli woman riding in a car in the West Bank on Sunday, while a US envoy planned another round of Mideast truce talks set for later in the day.

The persistent violence has complicated efforts by Anthony Zinni, the US mediator to work out a cease-fire that could halt 18 months of Israeli-Palestinian violence.

In Sunday's shooting, the woman was hit near the entrance to the Jewish settlement of Ateret, not far from the West Bank city of Ramallah, the Israeli army said. *AP*

Anti-mob act invoked vs priests

WASHINGTON—Lawyers are invoking a law used in the past to round up mobsters in a new legal nightmare for the Roman Catholic Church over child abuse by priests.

Claiming that the church hierarchy is involved in a conspiracy of silence to protect priests who abuse children, the suit filed in Hannibal, Missouri, comes under the Racketeering Influence and Corrupt Organizations Act (Rico).

The law includes provisions for civil lawsuits when someone is harmed by a "pattern" of illegal activity.

In this case, plaintiff attorneys argue that church leaders engaged in conspiracy by keeping the files on priests accused of pedophilia secret.

The plaintiff, Jeffrey Anderson, a 34-year-old Missouri man, alleges he was sexually abused by former bishop Anthony O'Connell. *AFP*

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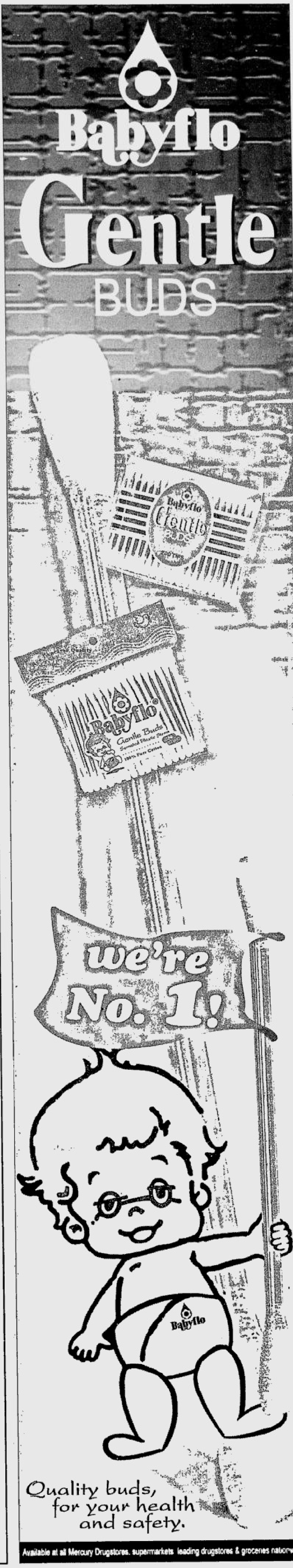

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MILF says Federal Army exists

DAVAO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front on Saturday said the Indigenous Peoples' Federal Army (IPFA) exists and that it has been demanding for the establishment of a federal state in Mindanao.

However, Ghadzali Jaafar, MILF vice chair for political affairs, rejected speculations that the MILF was behind the creation of the IFPA, which earlier claimed responsibility for planting bombs around Metro Manila and in various parts of Mindanao.

Jaafar said the MILF treated the IPFA as a legitimate revolutionary organization, and even attempted to talk with the group's leaders.

"The MILF leadership has tried to discuss issues with the IPFA but no consensus was met," he told radio station dxDC here.

Earlier reports indicated that the IFPA was a creation of the MILF to divert the government's attention from the rebel organization.

Jaafar admitted to having known some leaders of the IFPA but declined to name them.

In Cotabato City, the military said "raw intelligence report" tagged Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol as behind the bomb scare in Mindanao and in Metro Manila.

Silvino Cinches, director of the National Bureau of Investigation in Central Mindanao, said he was furnished the same report.

Cinches said the report described Piñol, a former journalist, as an "adviser" of the IPFA.

Piñol categorically denied the allegation. He said he was not even sure if the IPFA was real because he only read about the group from media reports.

"There are several groups organized by *lumads* in the province, but I have not officially come across the IPFA," Piñol told the INQUIRER.

He said he was close to *lumad* groups in his province, but "never have I incited them to rebel or take up arms or sow terror as what this group (IPFA) is doing."

"I have never been an adviser of any group that would sow fear on our people. Peace, harmony and coexistence have always been my priority concerns because these are vital factors in development," Piñol said.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF information chief, said the governor may not be behind the IPFA but could be involved in the planting of bombs by the Christian Lumad Nationalist Army (CLNA).

The CLNA claimed responsibility for the March 21 bomb scare in Cotabato City. ***Anthony S. Allada, Charlie S. Señase and Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

Heart disease top Bohol killer, says health office

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Heart disease remains the leading cause of death among Boholanos, according to figures compiled by the Provincial Health Office (PHO) in Bohol.

The PHO annual accomplishment report for 2001, submitted by provincial health officer Dr. Francisco Razalo, said heart diseases remained the leading cause of death but the rate of death was lower compared to previous years.

A total of 998 deaths last year were attributed to heart ailments, accounting for 91.08 percent. The figure, however, is lower than the 98.47 percent rate of heart disease-related deaths in Bohol from 1996 to 2000.

Pneumonia also remained the second leading cause of death with 746 or 68 percent but the figure was lower than the 73.62 percent listed five years earlier.

Cancer-related deaths were a far third with 453 or 41.34 percent, higher than its previous rating of 36.6 percent.

Hypertension, a cause of heart disease, rose to fourth spot with 348 deaths or 31.76 percent, a little higher than the former rating of 30.88 percent.

In fifth spot were cerebro-vascular diseases with 321 reported cases accounting for 29.29 percent, a steep rise from only 12.58 percent.

Tuberculosis dropped a rank lower from fifth to sixth spot with 321 deaths or 25.64 percent, a decrease from 26 percent.

Accidents were the seventh causes of death in the list with 184 deaths or 16.79 percent, up from the 13.52 percent.

Genito-urinary diseases claimed 164 lives, accounting for 14.97 percent of deaths, breaking into the top 10 leading causes of death for the first time in six years.

The ninth leading cause of death was bleeding peptic ulcer with 153 deaths or 13.96 percent, dropping from 14.35 percent.

Rounding out the top 10 was septicemia with 134 deaths accounting for 12.34 percent, less than the previous rating of 15.39 percent.

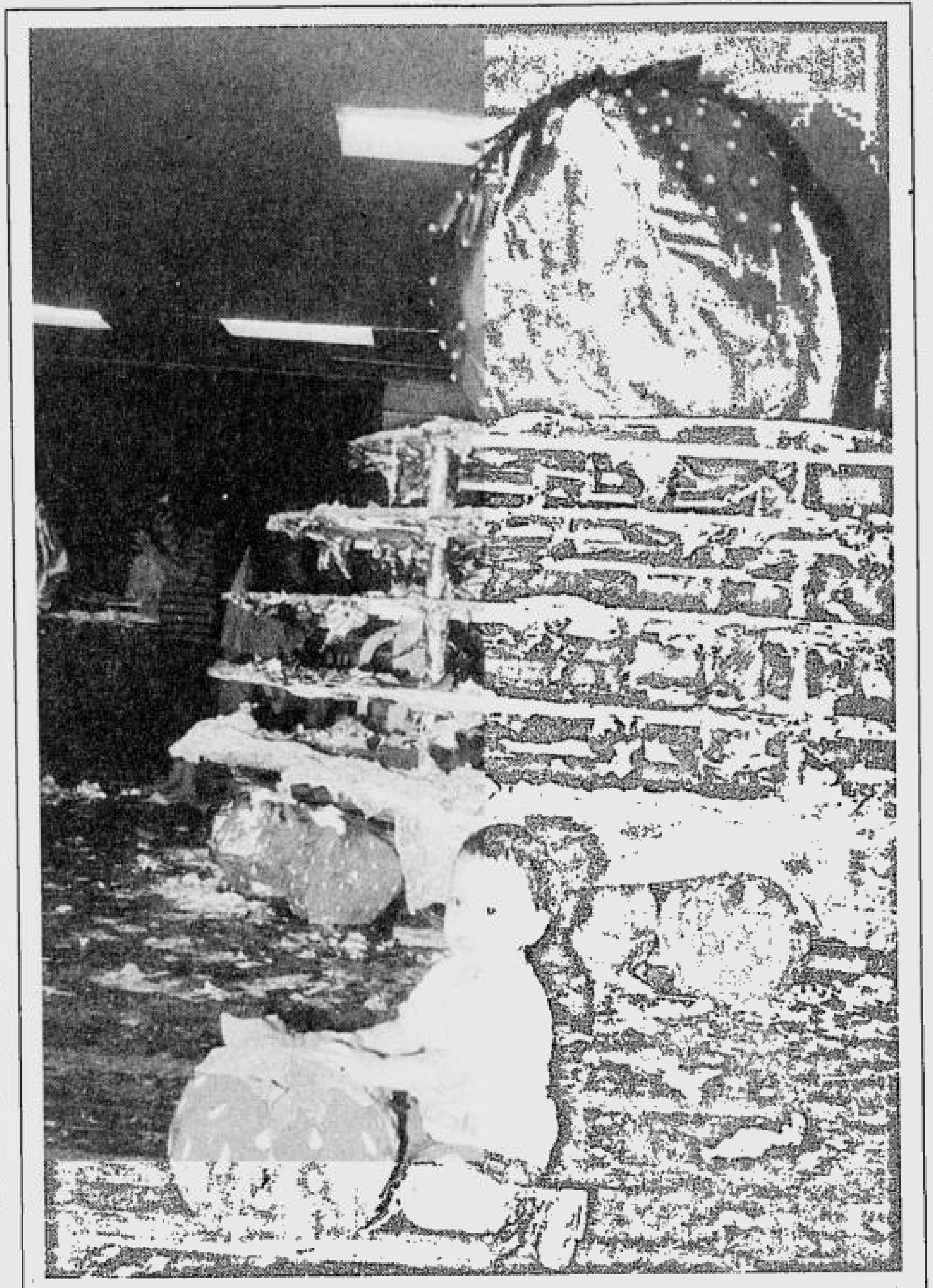
According to the PHO, the elderly or those over 65 years old accounted for over 50 percent of deaths in Bohol.

Seven of the top 10 causes of death were categorized as "non-infectious in nature" while only three were attributed to infectious or biological agents.

The said this painted a "healthy picture of a developed community."

"(P)eople die because of old age and not because of infection…" the report said.

The same report, however, acknowledged that the elimination of infection as a cause of death "should be a priority concern of the province."



TOOTS SOBERANO

NO LEFTOVER
A frame is all that was left of a strawberry cake that officials and residents of La Trinidad, Benguet, built in a bid to break world records for the biggest strawberry cake. At least 13,400 people, including this boy, helped finish the cake off.

Davao gets ready for arrival of 2,000 Japanese

DAVAO CITY—Japan is likely to exclude this city from its travel ban as some 2,000 Japanese are set to arrive to commemorate 100 years of Japanese presence here.

Roger Layson, deputy director of the Department of Tourism in Southern Mindanao, said Japanese consul to Davao City Hiyoshi Suwa supported the lifting of the travel ban here.

"He told us that everything is fine, that the ban may be lifted before June," Layson said.

Shortly after the United States invaded Afghanistan, Japan urged its citizens not to travel to the Philippines.

Layson said that during the event commemorating the 100th year of Japanese presence in Davao, Japanese visitors, including government officials, would be undertaking a sentimental journey by visiting Japanese cemeteries and shrines in the city.

Aside from the cemeteries, the Japanese delegation will visit the Japanese Museum in Calinan District before proceeding to Sta. Cruz and Malita towns in Davao del Sur, where Japanese shrines and memorials were also set up.

There are two Japanese cemeteries here, one in Mintal, which is 15 kilometers away and another in Catalunan Grande, some 10 km away.

The two cemeteries, however, have been badly maintained although caretakers have been hired.

Earlier, the city government and descendants of Japanese settlers signed a memorandum of agreement for the rehabilitation of the "desecrated and vandalized" cemeteries.

This city started to be known as "Little Tokyo" in June of 1902 after Japanese nationals set up abaca plantations.

Layson said preparations for the events have started and hotels issued assurances they could take in visitors.

"There are also home stay programs where they will stay with their relatives here," he said.

Mayor Rodrigo Duterte said the city government has already firmed up plans to secure the visitors. ***Joel B. Escovilla and Ayan C. Mellejor, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

12-year-old boy flees captors after pretending to be asleep

COTABATO CITY—A 12-year-old first year high school student here was able to escape his captors on Friday after he pretended to be asleep.

Senior Insp. Banaren Kamaong, police spokesperson, said the kidnappers left the boy inside their hideout, thinking he was really asleep.

Kamaong said Benedict Bahilidad, a student of the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College, was walking home around 11 a.m. on Friday when three suspects abducted him.

Bahilidad claimed that one of the three suspects was armed with a kitchen knife, while the other was holding a handkerchief soaked in a chemical that induces sleep.

"I fell unconscious after a man covered my mouth with a white handkerchief," the boy recalled.

The suspects then hid him in a house at the outskirts of the city.

Around 5 p.m., Bahilidad said he pretended to be asleep and was left alone inside the house.

"Before leaving, they came closer to me as if to ensure I am asleep. I pretended to be sleeping soundly so they left," he said in the vernacular.

After the suspects, whom he described as wearing military uniforms and armed with handguns, have left, Bahilidad said he broke the jalousies of the house's windows and escaped through one window.

Carmen, the boy's mother, said the abductors could be members of a white slavery syndicate.

The boy said he also suspected the same.

"They would sell me to someone else. I heard them talking about it," he said.

Local officials, business leaders and concerned citizens had asked the government to put a stop to kidnappings and other forms of criminality in this city following a spate of kidnappings of businessmen and doctors. ***Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

'TINDAHAN NI GLORIA'

Rice retailers protest encroachment of rolling stores

By Jovelyn Reyes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Rice retailers in the city said the cheap rice and basic commodities sold by the National Food Authority's "Tindahan ni Gloria Labandera" rolling stores have caused them losses as these have attracted buyers even from high-income families.

Members of the local chapter of the Grains Retailers Confederation (Grecon) said the inability of the NFA to implement the "passbook system" is depriving them of their share of the market.

The "passbook system" accredits poor families certified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development for them to buy goods from the rolling stores.

But Nick Crisostomo, NFA director for Cordillera and Ilocos, said the NFA does not stop anyone from patronizing the rolling stores.

"Anybody can buy from the rolling stores… we do not stop well-off families from buying," Crisostomo said.

He said they could not lower the prices of goods sold at the rolling stores because of a directive from the NFA national office.

At least seven rolling stores in Baguio are selling rice, sugar, milk, instant coffee and laundry soap at prices lower than those in groceries, market stalls and sari-sari stores.

Each rolling store has a supply of at least 50 sacks of rice.

Crisostomo said the NFA supplies rice to the rolling stores at P650 per sack while commercial retailers get their NFA rice supplies from the agency at P750 per sack.

"The difference is too big. We are buying the same quality and quantity of rice, why are they selling it (to the rolling stores) for less than the actual price?" Mario de la Cruz, member of the Grecon Baguio chapter, said.

De la Cruz said he had been selling rice at the Baguio City market since 1980 and this was the first time that he experienced low sales. There are at least 300 accredited rice retailers in the city.

The rolling stores sell NFA rice at P14 per kilogram while commercial retailers sell it at P16 a kilo.

"Who are going to buy rice from us when they can now buy cheaper rice right at their doorsteps? The passbook system should be strictly implemented," De la Cruz said.

He said they used to sell 30 sacks a day, "but since the rolling store program went full blast, our sales gradually decreased by as much as 50 percent," he said.

"The average sale for a retailer now is down to between 12 and 15 sacks a day," he added.

Rolling stores, he said, had become their direct competitors.

"But we are not blaming the program," he said.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	HI34° Lo 24°
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 26° Lo 16°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 34° Lo 23°
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 34° Lo 23°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 23°
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 22°
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 23°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 23°
Roxas	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 25°
Cebu	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 23°
Tacloban	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy	Hi 33° Lo 25°
Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy	Hi 34° Lo 26°
Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 23°
Davao	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/03/25/02

Cops protest dismissal of nudity charges vs Koreans

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The police, the security guard of Fort San Pedro and the head of the anti-indecency group in Cebu City were unhappy over the dismissal of the criminal complaint filed against the two female South Korean nationals involved in a nude photo session at the historic fort on Thursday.

Chief Insp. Glen Ares, head of the Waterfront Police Station, said he was surprised why the city prosecutor's office dismissed the complaint when they had established "a probable cause" against the two Korean women.

But Assistant City Prosecutor Rudolf Joseph Carillo yesterday said there was no probable cause to elevate to the court the case of violation of Presidential Decree 969 or the law against exhibiting naked bodies against Su Young Sun, 21 and Yoo Sun Ha, 26.

Carillo said that aside from the cameras and film, there was no other material evidence against the respondents presented during the inquest proceeding on Friday.

"The arresting officers said that the respondents immediately covered themselves when told to do so," he said. "To the mind of this investigating officer, no criminal or malicious intent can be readily perceived from the circumstances."

Their actions, he added, may be attributed to difference in cultural traits.

Ares said he was very dismayed upon hearing accusations over radio and in a column in a local newspaper that the police mishandled the case because of some "consideration."

Ares admitted that there was an attempt to bribe his men who responded to the complaint that there were foreigners having a nude photo session at the fort.

But Ares said the two policemen—SPO2 Conrado Rocamora and PO2 Ismael Gandionco—ignored the offer by a Korean national who served as the tour guide of the group to just "settle" the incident.

They instead brought the Korean women and their seven male Korean companions, who were taking the photos and video footage of their nude poses, to the Waterfront police station, which is just a few meters away from the fort.

Although there was no mention of money, Ares believed the Koreans wanted to bribe his men.

Ares said if the Koreans were innocent, "why then would they try to settle the case?"

Ares said the Koreans also destroyed the films of their camera by exposing it during the arrest.

Derick Albina, the security guard of Fort San Pedro who filed the complaint to the police, said he was dismayed that the Cebu City prosecutor's office did not give weight to his sworn statement.

Cops say death squad men known, on the run

DIGOS CITY—Members of the so-called Digos Death Squad are reportedly on the run after authorities here unmasked their alleged leaders and links that led to the death of two of the group's associates.

Early this month, one of the group's members, Gualberto Mandahoyan, was found dead at the Digos public market with his left ear cut off.

On March 13, another member was killed in a shootout with policemen during a raid in Hagonoy town in Davao del Sur. Virgilio Mariscal alias Virling suffered multiple bullet wounds in different parts of the body after he fired back at members of the 1103th Provincial Police Mobile Group.

On Monday night, three alleged members of the vigilante group whose leader was identified as Polor Aznar also clashed with 1103th PPMG elements on Lapu-lapu Extension here, leaving civilian volunteer Gregorio Tornez wounded.

. This came even as the police refused to believe that the suspects were vigilante members but actually professional hit men hired by gangsters who were also involved in a series of robberies and in the illegal drug trade.

Police theorized that Aznar's group was behind the killing of at least 20 suspected drug pushers here since October. The killings, authorities said, were related to a gang's effort to monopolize the drug industry in the city. ***Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

3 cops hurt in reb attack in Butuan

BUTUAN CITY—Three policemen were wounded after New People's Army guerrillas fired on them in Barangay Tagabaca here Wednesday.

Senior Supt. Felix Gonzales, city police director, said he and his men were on their way to Barangay de Oro to check on reports that suspected rebels burned several heavy equipment when the ambush took place.

Gonzales identified the wounded lawmen as SPO4 Cludioso Cajutol Jr., SPO2 Charlo Dispo and PO2 Ramil Coniado.

The rebels retreated after the ambush.

Gonzales said the heavy equipment, which included two road rollers, a grader, three backhoes, a pay loader and a bulldozer, were owned by Arthur Ong of Conception Basic Builders Inc.

The NPA admitted burning the heavy equipment.

Archie Ulin, spokesperson of the Eastern Agusan del Norte Sub-Provincial Command of the Northern Mindanao Regional Command, told the INQUIRER that Ong was being punished for his "sins against farmers and workers." ***Ma. Kristina E. Cassion, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

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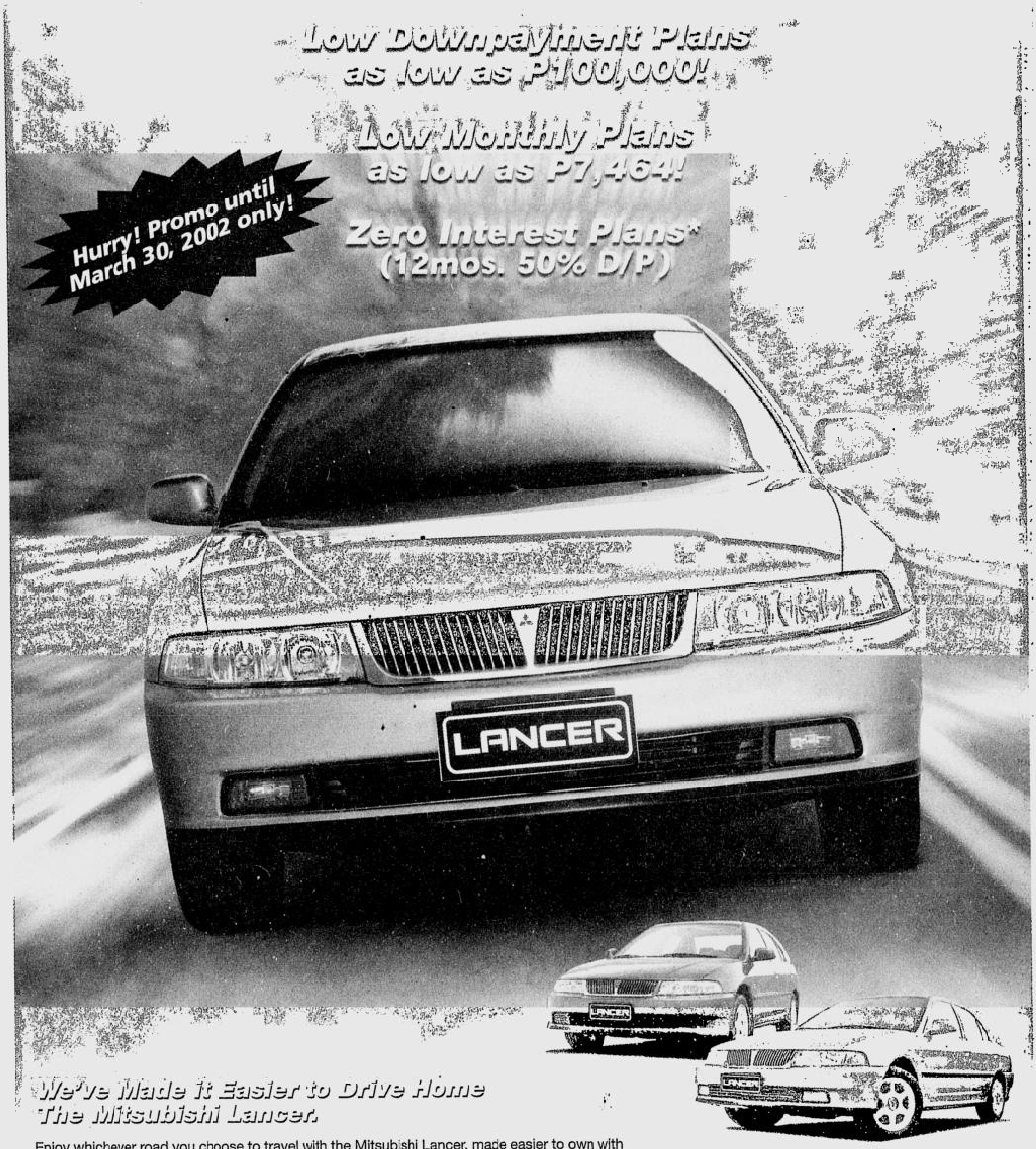
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GLS M/T	680,000		49,333	34,019	27,035	19,287	15,594	13,775
GLS A/T	710,000		51,509	35,519	28,228	20,138	16,282	14,383

P150,000 D/P Plans

Model	ESP	20% D/P	12 mos.	18 mos.	24 mos.	36 mos.	48 mos.	60 mos.
MX	790,000	150,000	57,313	39,522	31,408	22,407	18,117	16,004

*All Plans Subject to Bank Approval

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Model	ESP	50% D/P	12 mos.	18 mos.	24 mos.	36 mos.	48 mos.	60 mos.
GLX M/T	620,000	310,000	*25,833	18,414	14,649	10,450	8,373	7,464
GLS M/T	680,000	340,000	30,060	20,729	16,482	11,758	9,420	8,398
GLS A/T	710,000	355,000	31,386	21,643	17,209	12,277	9,836	8,768
MX	790,000	395,000	34,923	24,082	19,148	13,660	10,944	9,756

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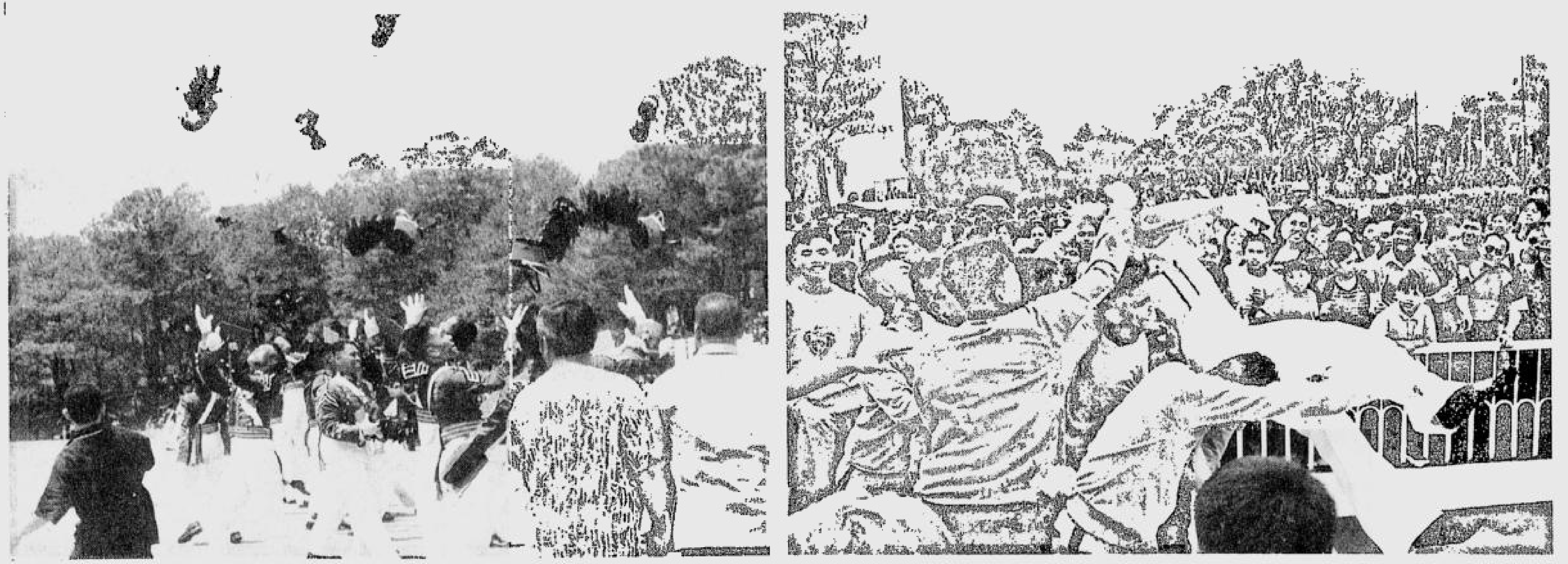


NEVER-ENDING traditions during the PMA commencement exercises: Tossing of the shako (feathered hats) and the dunking of graduates. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

GMA defends soldiers, says charges of human rights abuses an insult

From page A1

doing civic action work, while giving food and medicine to hapless communities. They have been shot in the middle of humanitarian missions."

In the fight against terrorism, she said, more than 200 officers and enlisted men have been killed or wounded in action since January. The true violators are the terrorists, who are the enemies of the people, she added.

In Isabela City, the peace mission conducting a public hearing at the Basilan State College endured a second day of frustration.

"I was disappointed. I cannot see the human rights victims and I believe that the Armed Forces are creating this atmosphere so that they (the alleged victims) will not come forward," University of the Philippines professor Walden Bello told the INQUIRER.

"I thought that democratic process was being observed when I saw local people at the venue of the public hearing, but later I found that they were victims of bandit atrocities and not (of) state-perpetrated abuses and I was surprised to see that none of the people we were expecting appeared," Aijaz Ahmad, an Islamic writer from India, said.

The President found an ally in opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, who told reporters covering the PMA rites that he did not believe soldiers were violating the human rights of the people in Basilan.

"As I heard, they are focused on the possibility that there are human rights violations (in Basilan). But I do not agree (with) the proposition that there are human rights violations being committed by our soldiers. The fact is that we find it difficult to round up the Abu Sayyaf, (precisely because) of the 'carefulness' of our soldiers" not to commit atrocities, he said.

Biazon is a PMA alumnus and former AFP chief of staff.

Global war

Ms Macapagal also used the colorful graduation rites to repeat her assertion that the fight against the Abu Sayyaf bandit group was part of the international war on terrorism.

Because terrorism is "a transnational threat that needs transnational counteraction," she said the war against terrorists in Basilan had become a "global fight."

"The war against terrorism has molded the world's soldiery into one," she said. "Today, the name of the game is multilateral coalition."

"What used to be a lonely fight in the Southern Philippines became a global fight on Sept. 11 and now we are joined by American forces in training and civic action," she said.

Indonesian and Malaysian intelligence forces have also joined the fight against terrorism and "other transnational crimes in our common seas," she added.

"The byword today is inter-operability. This is necessary because of the transient and rapidly shifting threat of terrorism."

To meet this trend, the President said she had instructed the AFP to change its "conservative values" for a "global outlook."

"This global involvement and outlook do not mean a diminution of sovereignty or constitutional integrity," she said, adding that the AFP is a "constitutional instrument" that "defends democracy and protects human rights."

Biazon said the President's anti-terrorism campaign appeared to be "keeping up with the times."

"This new war of terrorism is a game without any rules. The rules are being evolved," he said.

"That is why I asked the Department of Foreign Affairs to review . . . all treaties, multilateral agreements and bilateral agreements, especially involving the Americans . . . and, yes, the 1950 Mutual Defense Treaty and the Visiting Forces Agreement (against) the backdrop of a (universal anti-terrorism) army."

Frightened witnesses

Sitti Djalia Turabin-Hataman, Moro Human Rights Center director, said 31 witnesses were expected to appear at yesterday's public hearing, "but they are very afraid because of the perpetrators' reprisal."

She said copies of the complaints had been submitted to the House committee on civil, political and human rights chaired by party-list Rep. Etta Rosales (Akbayan).

Rosales said she had met with at least six victims in an executive meeting at the Anson's Hotel, "but I was informed that continuous military operation is the main reason the witnesses cannot come today in this hearing."

Ronald Llamas, another member of the peace mission, said witnesses and victims from Barangay Tabuk did not show up "because they were reportedly advised by the barangay officials that the schedule had been moved (to another date)."

The arrival of members of the mission and House committee members yesterday morning was met by more than 100 anti-communist and pro-American demonstrators.

The public hearing, which started at 10 a.m., was interrupted by a power outage. Power was restored only at 1 p.m., after a recess had been called and an executive meeting held.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez, in text messages he sent to the INQUIRER, lambasted Bello and the mission for their anti-American and anti-World Bank bias.

"His team will proceed no doubt into a fault-finding frenzy and blame all of Basilan's ills on the demons that haunt their mind. They will see human rights violations in everything the military, both Philippine and US, does, but will see no evil in the ways of the Abu Sayyaf," Golez said.

But Bello said the Basileños and the national government had misinterpreted their real purpose.

"What we want to find out is the degree of abuses committed by the state against the people whom they are suspecting as (members of the) Abu Sayyaf," he said.

'Myriad roles' of RP soldiers

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—Before 138 new graduates of the Philippine Military Academy, President Macapagal-Arroyo outlined her vision of the "myriad roles" of today's Filipino soldiers.

"There is . . . a change in the way we are fighting war, there is change in the way we're fighting poverty," Ms Macapagal said. "All these changes are sweeping the political, social and economic landscape. In all these, the Filipino soldiers are involved as participants and vanguards."

"You must be involved in good governance, in propagating and exemplifying the values of honesty, duty and conscience throughout the entire spread of the military and civil service. You must lead in the fight against poverty by tempering the martial rule of the soldier with the will and compassion to fight ignorance, disease and social justice."

Calling the conflict in Basilan as "much, much more than a shooting war," the President said there was a need for soldiers to "work for peace, for rebuilding our communities, for strengthening the bridges of understanding and common ideals."

She said the soldiers must be "warriors and peacemakers, steely fighters in meeting enemy fire and (at the same time) agents of reconciliation and solidarity in waging a just and honorable peace with former foes." ***Rolando Fernandez and Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Class 'goat' gets wish: Combat duty in Basilan

From page A1

his wish to go to Basilan had reached the President.

"I felt somewhat guilty when the President said my assignment was not a reward but rather a punishment. But I still feel privileged that it is our Chief Executive herself who (is sending) me to Basilan," he said.

"I guess I have to be serious if she is serious," Inumpa said right after throwing his shako (feathered cap) in the air, the traditional symbol of graduation.

"I have always wanted to be a soldier," he said.

Unusual speech

Inumpa said it was his classmates who decided he should give a speech—only the second time in PMA history that a class goat had done so. Most goats simply strut on stage or bow before the crowd.

In his five-minute speech, which he prepared only on Friday, he said he found it unfair that the biggest applause would go to him instead of to the valedictorian, Cadet First Class Charlie Domingo Jr.

"I felt that I was (being) buttered up with that overwhelming applause," he said.

Inumpa described himself as the "inefficacious and fruitless member of the graduating class."

He admitted that his failure in math subjects had impeded his academic pursuit.

He also had to go on leave twice, in 2000 and then in 2001. That made him the most qualified for the title, he said.

Domingo and Inumpa, who stood on opposite ends of the "long gray line," were among the oldest members of the graduating class.

Several PMA officials did not approve of Inumpa's speech.

Marine Capt. Edgardo Arevalo, PMA spokesperson, said that while there was no rule against the class goat delivering a speech, the graduating cadet should still observe propriety and decorum.

"It is quite absurd . . . for a goat to deliver a speech rather than the class valedictorian. Even the removing of a cap during graduation is not authorized, but it has been a practice by the past goats," Arevalo told the INQUIRER.

But Arevalo said the tradition allowing the goat to assert his distinction had evolved over the years.

Nevertheless, Inumpa should take the President's "admonition" seriously.

"We should take it from the context of the President's speech that it was a punishment. She was serious when she said that her directive to Inumpa was not a reward but a punishment. Otherwise, she would have said that she was only kidding," said Arevalo.

"But whether the President punishes him or not, Inumpa has the desire to go to Basilan. The impression was he asked permission to deliver his speech and the President acknowledged it."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, possibly the PMA's most successful goat, said it was the second time that a class goat had addressed the graduating class.

"What Inumpa did can be a start of a tradition, but was it appropriate?" he asked. "The class goat could have said (what he wanted to say) in two or three sentences but not in a five-minute speech."

Inumpa, whose parents hail from Bontoc, Mt. Province, was one of two Cordillerans cited by Ms Macapagal for exemplifying the "new face of life" implied in their class name, Banyuhay.

The President also cited Cadet First Class Jessica Bucalen of Kalinga for being the "female Tarzan" of the class. "Tarzan" is the traditional PMA name for the athlete of the year. The 21-year-old Bucalen excelled in taekwondo, athletics and swimming. ***With a report from Rolando Fernandez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

No room for complacency as business confidence rises

From page A1

tracts erode public and business confidence in government. This erosion is best illustrated by the fall of the scandal-ridden administration of then President Joseph Estrada.

His fall represents political costs as well as the economic costs on his poverty-alleviation programs that were drained of financing by leakages due to corruption.

Not benevolent

Businessmen are not being benevolent or altruistic in their readiness to finance an anti-corruption fund with 2 percent of the net income. They will be financially ahead if the costs of corruption are reduced.

One problem is who can be trusted to manage an anti-corruption fund. The SWS 2001 surveys show that 26 percent of respondents think that the private sector is more trusted than the public sector (which polled 22 percent).

There is, however, no escaping the fact that the state plays the key role in an anti-corruption program. Hong Kong's program, for example, has often cited by the WB as a good model.

Only the state can implement and drive an anti-corruption program because it has the coercive power to initiate prosecutions.

So, the problem boils down to the political will of government to implement the program.

Based on the SWS findings, the business community's perception of a more favorable environment for an anti-corruption campaign exists today than in the past administration.

Select group

The surveys find that a select group of public sector institutions has a high net sincerity rating (derived from the difference between much sincere and insincere).

The Office of the President topped the rating with a +87-point change from –34 points in August-October 2000 (during the Estrada administration) to +58 points in September-December 2001.

The Supreme Court had a +11-point change from +39 in 2000 to +50 in 2001. The Sandiganbayan had a +5-point change, from +16 to +21; the Office of the Ombudsman,' +12 points, from –5 to +7; the trial courts, +19 points, from –19 to 0; and the Commission on Audit, with a +11-point gain, from +5 to +16.

The Senate did not come out too well. Its net sincerity rating changed –1 point, from –3 to –4. By contrast, the House of Representatives had a marked improvement in net sincerity rating, with +14 points, from—29 to –15.

Apparently, the Senate's flurry of investigations of corruption scandals, including the alleged involvement of some of its members (i.e., Sen. Panfilo Lacson) in scandals, wrought havoc on its sincerity rating.

On the other hand, with fewer investigations taking its time and Speaker Jose de Venecia's consensus approach on legislation, the House had a better rating than the Senate.

The Philippine National Police had a –27-point net sincerity rating, from –24 to –51; the Bureau of Internal Revenue, +19 points, from –74 to –55; and the Bureau of Customs, +23 points, from –83 to -71.

In the category of government agencies perceived as devoid of corruption, again the Office of the President made a big gain in businessmen's perception. Seven percent perceived it as without corruption, compared to 0.5 percent in 2002.

Fifteen percent identified the Department of Education, Culture and Sports as "without corruption," compared to 2 percent in 2000 when the DECS was rocked with supply and book procurement scandals; the Supreme Court had 9 percent, from 4 percent.

Government agencies identified as corrupt were the BIR, 67 percent; Bureau of Customs, 65 percent; Department of Public Works and Highways, 38 percent; and the PNP, 32 percent.

From these findings, the administration has a pointer on where to focus its anti-corruption reforms.

Complacency

The businessmen's perception regarding the Macapagal administration's sincerity to undertake an anti-corruption drive has improved. Still, the administration cannot be complacent.

Such a perception does not mean the Macapagal administration has shown results. The findings merely show that businessmen have become more confident in the current administration than the previous one, and that they are giving the President the benefit of the doubt.

This environment of trust should be a favorable staging point for an anti-corruption drive.

The findings leave no room for complacency. Complacency is a deadly virus, whether it is found in positive government forecasts on gross national product growth or in the SWS finding that the "trend in corruption seems not as bad."

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
ADB-ASSISTED
SUBIC BAY AREA MUNICIPALITIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
City of Olongapo

21 March 2002

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND BID

1. The Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank herein referred to as the "Bank", in various currencies towards the cost of the Subic Bay Area Municipal Development Project and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be eligible for payments under contract for the Construction of the Elicaño Bridge, located at the City of Olongapo.
2. The project calls for the construction of a single span reinforced concrete deck girder bridge having a total length of eighteen (18) meters. The concrete deck has a clear width of 7.32 meters having a pedestrian sidewalks of 1.10 meters. The bridge's approach consists of 166 meters concrete pavement at the Elicaño Street with a 342 meters concrete pavement connecting road to the former Old Hospital Area. The abutments are founded on 0.40m x 0.40m reinforced concrete piles. The bridge will be provided with street lights to enhance visibility at night. The project also includes the landscaping for the roadside development.
3. The City Government of Olongapo, an Implementing Agency for the project is inviting contractors accredited by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Boad (PCAB) to apply for a prequalification to bid for the abovementioned project. Interested bidders classified and registered with the Inter-Agency Committee on Registration and Classification of Contractors as "Medium B" on Roads and Bridges and prequalified by the Local PBAC are eligible to bid for this project. Experience on related project is necessary.
4. Pre-C Forms shall be made available to contractors classified above upon submittal of Letter of Intent and copy of latest PCAB License and payment of non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 at the PBAC Secretariat, City Planning and Development Office, Olongapo City. Bring original copies of PCAB License for authentication. Schedule of activities are as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Submission of Letter of Intent	March 22 to April 5, 2002
b. Issuance of Pre-Forms	March 22 to April 5, 2002
c. Submission of Pre-C Statement	April 8 to 19, 2002
d. Notification of Prequalified/Predisqualified Contractors	May 13 to 17, 2002
e. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 20 to 24, 2002
f. Submission and Opening of Bids	June 24, 2002

5. Complete set of Bid/Tender Documents will be issued to pre-qualified contractors upon payment of non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 at the City Treasurer's Office.
6. Submission of Bid Documents shall not be later than **June 24, 2002 at 2:00 p.m.** and shall be opened at the City Council Session Hall on the date mentioned above.
7. The City of Olongapo reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects or informalities contained therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government.

(Sgd.) KATHERINE H. GORDON
City Mayor and PBAC Chairman

(PDI -- Mar. 22, 25 & Apr. 1, 2002)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Meralco scored for bid to hike electric rates

From page A1

to Francisco.

The increases are reflected in the purchased power adjustment (PPA), which appears in the customer's monthly bill along with the basic and other charges.

Meralco said the P3.97/kwh that Bayan was referring to consisted of the existing P3.22/kwh in the PPA and the 75 centavos in currency exchange rate adjustment (Cera) reflected in the bills sent to customers.

But Bayan said Meralco was petitioning for a rate increase of P1.12/kwh. Reyes said Meralco inserted its request for the bigger rate increase in its petition for the unbundling of rates on Dec. 26, 2001.

"This is precisely what we are against. Meralco is inserting various increases into what ought to be a simple unbundling of basic charges," the Bayan spokesperson said.

Reyes said the request for a bigger rate increase superseded Meralco's petition for a 30-centavo/kwh increase.

Profits

"Meralco has been candid enough to admit that the rate hike is meant to increase its (profitability) from 3.8 percent to 8 percent," Reyes said.

Meralco reportedly stands to earn as much as P16 billion in profits under the new rate scheme. It earned P3.31 billion in 1999 and P2.49 billion in 2000.

Bayan pointed out that 2.24 million customers consuming from 51 kwh to 300 kwh per month would be most affected by the Meralco proposal. They represent 68.33 percent of all Meralco customers.

A study conducted by the party-list group Bayan Muna, Meralco Employees and Workers Association and Bayan showed that the power rate increase proposed by Meralco would result in an average increase of P0.66 in the prices of goods and services.

Francisco explained that the P3.22 per kwh in PPA and 75 centavos per kwh in Cera were part of Meralco's proposal to the ERC on its unbundled rates.

"In the unbundling, Meralco's charges will no longer include the PPA but will show how much customers are paying for generation, transmission, distribution and supply," he said.

He said the petition of Meralco to unbundle its rates was based on 2000 figures and an ERC-prescribed method requiring the removal of cross subsidies.

"Currently, Meralco residential customers consuming not more than 300 kwh are heavily subsidized," Francisco said.

The subsidy will be gradually removed over a three-year period except for those consuming within 50 kwh, who are considered "lifeline consumers."

Under the Power Reform Law, "lifeline consumers" will lose their subsidy after 10 years. They comprise about 700,000 or 20 percent of Meralco's 3.7 million residential users.

Bayan blamed the impending increase in power rates on Malacañang, which the group said "pushed for mightily in order to pass the Power Reform Law at the behest of foreign multilateral agencies."

"President Macapagal-Arroyo, who last year railroaded Power Reform Law in Congress, should be held accountable for the nightmare that will befall millions across Luzon," Reyes said.

"We now ask the President: Where are the lower power charges she promised the public? Why will there be a 116-percent increase in power charges in the middle of the economic crisis?" Reyes said.

Estranged pa of top PMA graduate comes out

From page A1

Domingo's guardians claimed that the elder Domingo neglected and abandoned his wife Evelyn and his son.

About 20 minutes later, however, father and son met again. For a minute, they hugged each other.

Domingo Jr., wet after he was dunked by PMA cadets into the pool, was trying to hold back tears when he hugged his estranged father.

Despite efforts by his guardians to block the meeting, the younger Domingo said, "I am very happy because he came."

He excused himself and went to his barracks to dry up. His father, who came with his relatives, waited for another 20 minutes for Domingo to come out but to no avail.

"They could have taken him out through the building's other entrance," the elder Domingo said, referring to his son's guardians, the relatives of the young Domingo's late mother Evelyn.

"I just wanted to see him once again to bid him farewell," the elder Domingo said.

Second family

He insisted he did not abandon his son, saying he had to leave him and his mother to work in Metro Manila.

He now lives with his second family in Cauayan, Isabela, about 50 km from San Manuel town, where the young Domingo's guardians live.

Purificacion Domingo, 72, mother of the elder Domingo, said she and her relatives raised the young Domingo, whom they call "Butsoy," for three months after his son left for work in Metro Manila.

"But after three months, the Antonios (Sinfroso Antonio, Domingo's uncle, and Clarita Antonio, a grandmother) forcibly took Butsoy and Evelyn from us when I was working in the farm in Cauayan," Purificacion said.

"We tried to get them back, but Evelyn's parents refused," she said.

The elder Domingo said his parents-in-law wanted his son to believe that he was already dead.

"When Charlie was still a boy, they did not allow me to see him. They told him that I was already dead and I can't accept that. When he grew a little older, Charlie learned that I am still alive," he said.

He said he managed to keep track of his son's whereabouts through his brothers.

Letters

"He sent me letters, the first (letter) was to tell me that he was studying in Manila. The second was when he passed the PMA entrance exam, so I had always known that he was in the academy," he said.

He said he kept the letters in a "special" box.

Earlier, the younger Domingo's guardians said they had learned to forgive the misdeeds of the elder Domingo. They said they were expecting to see him during Domingo's graduation.

But Clarita Antonio, the elder Domingo's mother-in-law, was enraged by his presence. "Why did he show up only now when he learned that his son would be graduating from the PMA?" she asked.

But Sinfroso Antonio, uncle of the younger Domingo, who raised him since he was 6 years old, took his brother-in-law's presence lightly.

"Charlie is already a grown-up man and a PMAer at that. He knows what he is supposed to do (with his father)," Antonio said in Filipino.

Antonio had earlier told the INQUIRER that he and his relatives had already forgiven the elder Domingo. "Pero *mahirap magsalita. Bahala na si* (But it's difficult to speak. It's up to) Charlie," he said.

Antonio also accompanied his nephew when he met the elder Domingo on Saturday afternoon.

"I want him to be proud of me. I have forgiven him but 18 years are 18 years. It has really been a long time since we have seen each other," the younger Domingo said.

But the elder Domingo said he only wanted to see his son.

"I just want to please him and grant his wish to see me on his graduation day as stated in newspaper reports . . . (and) I am very proud of him," he said.

He described the brief meeting with his son as a good start. "I wanted to talk to him a little longer but I'm sure that his grandmother would not allow that. I hope we will see each other again," he said.

"*Butsoy, binabati kita sa iyong tagumpay. Sana maunawaan mo ako at sa iyo naman, nakakaunawa din ako* (Butsoy, I am congratulating you for your achievement. I hope that you will understand me. I want to tell you that I understand you)," he said.

Mexican . . .

From page A1

away from a luncheon meeting tendered on March 21 for heads of state who attended an international summit in Monterrey, Mexico.

"The embassy of Mexico regrets profoundly the embarrassing incident provoked by the State Government of Nuevo Leon at the recent summit in Monterrey," Hubbard said.

"It was a mistake, an unforgivable error but nothing more," he assured the Department of Foreign Affairs, which summoned him yesterday to receive a diplomatic protest.

A DFA source on Saturday told the INQUIRER that when he arrived for the luncheon meeting, Guingona was told that he was not on the list despite an official invitation. He left in a huff.

Guingona reportedly gave the order to file the protest even before his return here from Mexico.

Hubbard said it was the governor of Nuevo Leon, as host of the UN International Conference on Financing for Development, who tendered the lunch.

Guingona represented President Macapagal-Arroyo in the summit. He even delivered in Spanish the introduction to his speech titled "The Challenge of Poverty."

"The government of the state (Nuevo Leon) invited Vice President Guingona to a lunch given by the governor in honor of the chiefs of state and then told him upon arrival that he was not supposed to be in the list because he is not a chief of state," Hubbard said.

"They did invite him and that should have been sufficient. Turning him back was a terrible discourtesy," he said.

The ambassador tried to mollify Guingona by saying that the Mexican government "understand perfectly his irritation."

"Nothing we can say or do (that) will fix the damage done," he said.

"We can only express our sincere apology and assure the Vice President . . . that the incident has no bearing on our feelings, official and personal, toward this beloved country or Mr. Guingona himself," he went on.

He said the governor of Nuevo Leon had sent Guingona a personal letter of apology, and that he would also do so.

In a separate letter to the INQUIRER, Hubbard said he was "very embarrassed" to receive the note verbale from the DFA.

"As you can see, although it was all a terrible blunder by the government of one of our federated states, it affects the bilateral relations as a whole," he said.

"It happened in Mexico, regardless of the type of authority directly responsible," he added.

E-gadgets . . .

From page A1

said The Observer.

The change affects those who have grown up with hand-held devices where the thumbs are used for keying in text messages and emails.

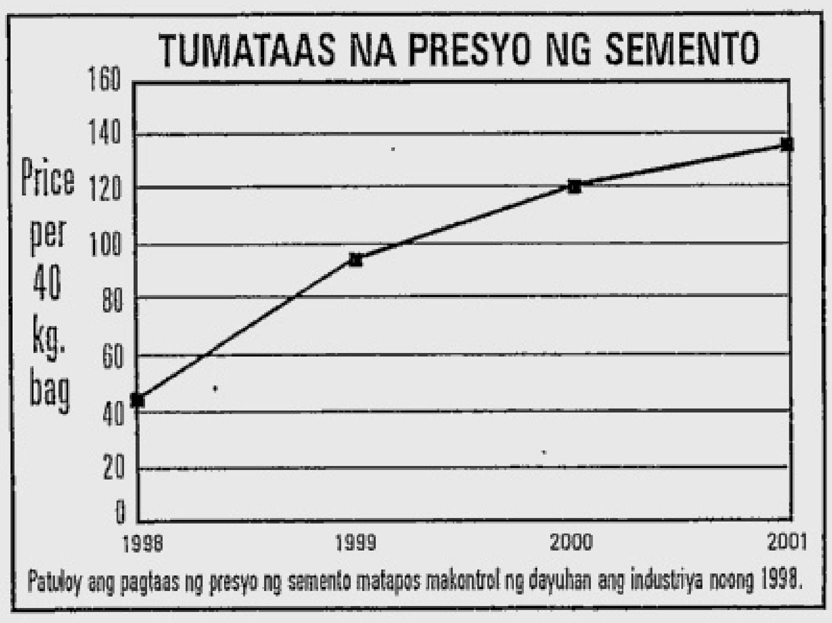
"The relationship between technology and the users of technology is mutual. We are changing each other," said Dr Sadie Plant of Warwick University's Cybernetic Culture Research Unit.

"Discovering that the younger generation has taken to using thumbs in a completely different way and are instinctively using thumbs where the rest of us are using our index fingers is particularly interesting."

In her research, Plant noticed that while those less used to mobile phones used one or several fingers to access the keypad, younger people used both thumbs ambidextrously, barely looking at the keys as they made rapid entries.

Reuters

PHILCEMCOR
-NABUKO
SA SARILING
DOKUMENTO



Patuloy ang pagtaas ng presyo ng semento matapos makontrol ng dayuhan ang industriya noong 1998.

KASINUNGALINGAN - *Sabi ng Philcemcor, ang industriya raw ng semento ay nakaranas ng matinding pagkalugi dahil sa inangkat na semento o "import surge".*

KATOTOHANAN - Ayon sa audited Financial Statements, kumita ang grupo ng CEMEX, LA FARGE at HOLDERBANK ng halagang P1.9 bilyon (Income from Operations) noong 2000. Lumabas na nalugi dahil sa interes na P5.1 bilyon, malaking bahagi nito ay binayad din sa CEMEX, LA FARGE, HOLDERBANK at sa mga stockholders nito. Yung ibang kumpanya ng semento na hindi sumama sa CEMEX, LA FARGE at HOLDERBANK sa petisyon ng safeguard ay lumaki ang benta na umabot sa P2.5 bilyon noong 1999 at P3.3 bilyon sa 2000.

KASINULINGAN - *Dahil daw sa pagdagsa ng importasyon ng semento, nawalan ng trabaho ang mga manggagawa sa industriya.*

KATOTOHANAN - Ayon sa pagsusuri ng Tariff Commission (TC), kusang sinara ng LA FARGE, CEMEX at HOLDERBANK ang 20 cement kilns noong 1997 hanggang 1999 bago pa dumagsa ang importasyon noong 2000. Limang (5) cement kilns ang sinara pa noong 2000 - 2001. Ang pinasarang kilns ay may kapasidad na halos 8 milyong toneladang semento bawat taon. Sa total na 37 kilns, 12 na lang ang umaandar sa ngayon. Bakit hindi buksan ang mga sinarang planta at ibalik yung mga tinanggal sa trabaho.

KASINUNGALINGAN - *Sa kapakanan daw ng taong bayan at sa mga manggagawa na proteksiyunan ang industriya ng semento sa pamamagitan ng pagpataw ng taripa sa inaangkat na semento.*

KATOTOHANAN - Ngunit patuloy ang pagtaas ng presyo ng semento matapos makontrol ng LA FARGE, CEMEX at HOLDERBANK ang industriya noong 1998 (P45 per bag at ngayon ay P150 per bag). Nasasabotahe ang housing program at ibang proyekto ng pamahalaan dahil sa mataas na presyo ng semento. Ayon sa TC, ang inaangkat na semento ang pumipigil sa posibleng abuso laban sa mamimiling Pilipino. Ang kumpetisyon ay magpapasigla rin sa industriya ng konstruksiyon na mayroong 1.5 milyong manggagawa.

**NAGPUPUGAY KAMI SA TARIFF COMMISSION
SA PANININDIGAN NITO SA KATOTOHANAN**

Napakalaking PR budget dahil sa napakalaking tubo. Sa P5.00 dagdag sa presyo per bag ay P1.25 bilyon ang tubo sa isang taon. Lahat ng kanilang pahayag ay hindi tuwirang sinasagot ang findings ng Tariff Commission. Mahirap talagang sirain ang katotohanan.

CONFEDERATION OF HOMEOWNERS ASS'N. FOR REFORMS IN GOVERNANCE AND ENVIRONMENT (CHARGE)
CONSUMERS UNION OF THE PHIL., INC.
PHIL. CONSUMER WATCH FOUNDATION, INC.
BANTAY MAMAMAYAN

SPORTS

Editor Al S. Mendoza ● Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

Mud wrestling tilt tonight

A MUD wrestling tournament will be held starting at 8 tonight at Padi's Mindave Restaurant Bar at the corner of Mindanao and Congressional avenues, Quezon City. Kaktooz band will also perform. For details, call 7229981, 4530080 or text 0917-8135916. Also on tap every Tuesday night is the Mr. & Ms. Padi's Mindave bodybuilding competition organized by Star Samson Bodybuilders Foundation.

SPORTS ON TV Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

GOLF: PGA—The Players Championship, Final Round at 2 p.m. (r – 9 p.m.) on Star Sports

BASKETBALL: US NCAA - ACC Tournament, Semifinal #1 at 8 a.m. (r); Semifinal #2 at 10 a.m. (r), Atlantic 10 Conference Championship at 1 p.m. (r), 2002 Postseason NIT Tournament at midnight (r) on ESPN

This Week in the NBA at 12:30 p.m. on CNN

Paolo, Chris tow Realtors past Tigers

MENDOZA

By June Navarro

GAMES ON MARCH 31
(Araneta Coliseum)
4 p.m.—Shell vs Talk N Text
6 p.m.—Ginebra vs San Miguel

STA. Lucia Realty got an inspiring lift from Paolo Mendoza and Chris Tan to post a thrilling 87-86 squeaker over Coca-Cola yesterday in the PBA Samsung Governors Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Mendoza hit three consecutive jumpers while Tan buried two climactic triples at crunchtime that brought the Realtors back on their feet in the face of imminent doom.

"Paolo and Chris made things happen for us. I think they're aware that imports cancel each other out and when it happens, the local should step up," said Sta. Lucia coach Norman Black.

Tan finished with 17 points including four three-pointers while Mendoza added 14 markers and six rebounds as the Realtors nailed their third win in seven games in a tie with San Miguel Beer.

Victor Thomas, who wound up with 27 points, sustained the backcourt duo's heroics with a three-point play in the last 30 seconds of play that eventually snapped the Tigers' three-game winning streak.

The Tigers netted 35 points from Ron Hale but it wasn't enough to stop the Realtors from dealing them a 5-3 win-loss slate.

Hale fired 18 of those markers in the second quarter and teamed up with Roselle Ellis as the Tigers wrested the lead from the Realtors at the half.

Ellis made 18 points but went scoreless in the fourth quarter, depriving the Tigers of a consistent offensive gunner.

Before Mendoza and Tan took over, the Realtors trailed most of the way as the Tigers made hay with Ellis and Hale giving them a lot of headache.

At the height of the Tigers' rally, Thomas and Mark Davis were the only signs of life for the Realtors as they took turns in attacking the basket.

Hale and Ellis put the Tigers ahead, 64-54, with barely two minutes left in the third before the Realtors, through Davis, Thomas and Marvin Ortiguerra, slowly worked their way to recovery.

The Realtors' patience paid off when Tan canned a trey and Mendoza converted three consecutive jumpers to give them a taste of the lead, 79-74.

Purefoods mocked Hapee-RP's vaunted zone defense to win by a mile, 107-77, in the second game.

The Hotdogs' fourth straight victory tightened their grip of the leadership at 7-1 while sending Hapee-RP to its second consecutive setback for a 4-4 record.

STA. LUCIA 87—Thomas 27, Davis 17, Tan 17, Mendoza 14, Falcasantos 6, Ortiguerra 4, Francisco 2, Belano 0.

COCA-COLA 86—Hale 35, Ellis 18, Ballesteros 12, Antonio 10, Abuda 7, Morano 4, Manalo 0.

Quarters: 23-19, 34-46, 61-64, 87-86

Oklahoma, Indiana enter Final 4

SAN JOSE, California—Second seed Oklahoma held off stubborn 12th seed Missouri, 81-75, to win the West Final of the NCAA Tournament on Saturday to advance to next weekend's Final Four in Atlanta.

Joining Oklahoma are fifth seed Indiana who overcame 10th-ranked Kent State, 81-69, in the South Regional Final.

The losses marked the end of spectacular runs for both Missouri (24-12) and Kent State (30-6), while Oklahoma (31-4) and Indiana (24-11) both showed the form that earned them the higher seedings.

Hollis Price scored 18 points to lead the Sooners, with his final two points coming on free throws with six seconds left to seal Oklahoma's 12th consecutive victory.

Oklahoma goes on to the national semifinals for the first time since 1988.

Missouri was hoping to become the first 12th seed to ever advance to the Final Four.

Ebi Ere added 17 points for Oklahoma, which led 41-33 at the half, while Aaron McGhee added 15 points.

Sooners coach Kelvin Sampson joined his players in an on-court celebration after the win, as he advanced to the Final Four for the first time in 17 years of coaching.

The Tigers never quit, pulling to within 54-53 with less than 15 minutes to play. But the Sooners never trailed and made big baskets when they needed them, especially Price, the Region's MVP, who made four 3-pointers.

Rickey Paulding had 23 points for Missouri, while Kareem Rush added 17.

Missouri made one final push to come to within 70-67 with less than four minutes to play, but McGhee hit a key 3-pointer to all but seal the win.

LSU still holds the distinction of being the lowest seeded team to make the Final Four, at number 11 in 1986.

Kent State had similar thoughts of an upset, but it wasn't to be for the Golden Flashes, who trailed 40-28 at halftime.

The Hoosiers were sharp all night, making their first eight long-range shots of the night and shooting 78.9 percent overall from 3-point range in the game, setting up a clash with the Sooners next Saturday night at Atlanta.

The 15 3-pointers Indiana made was a school record.

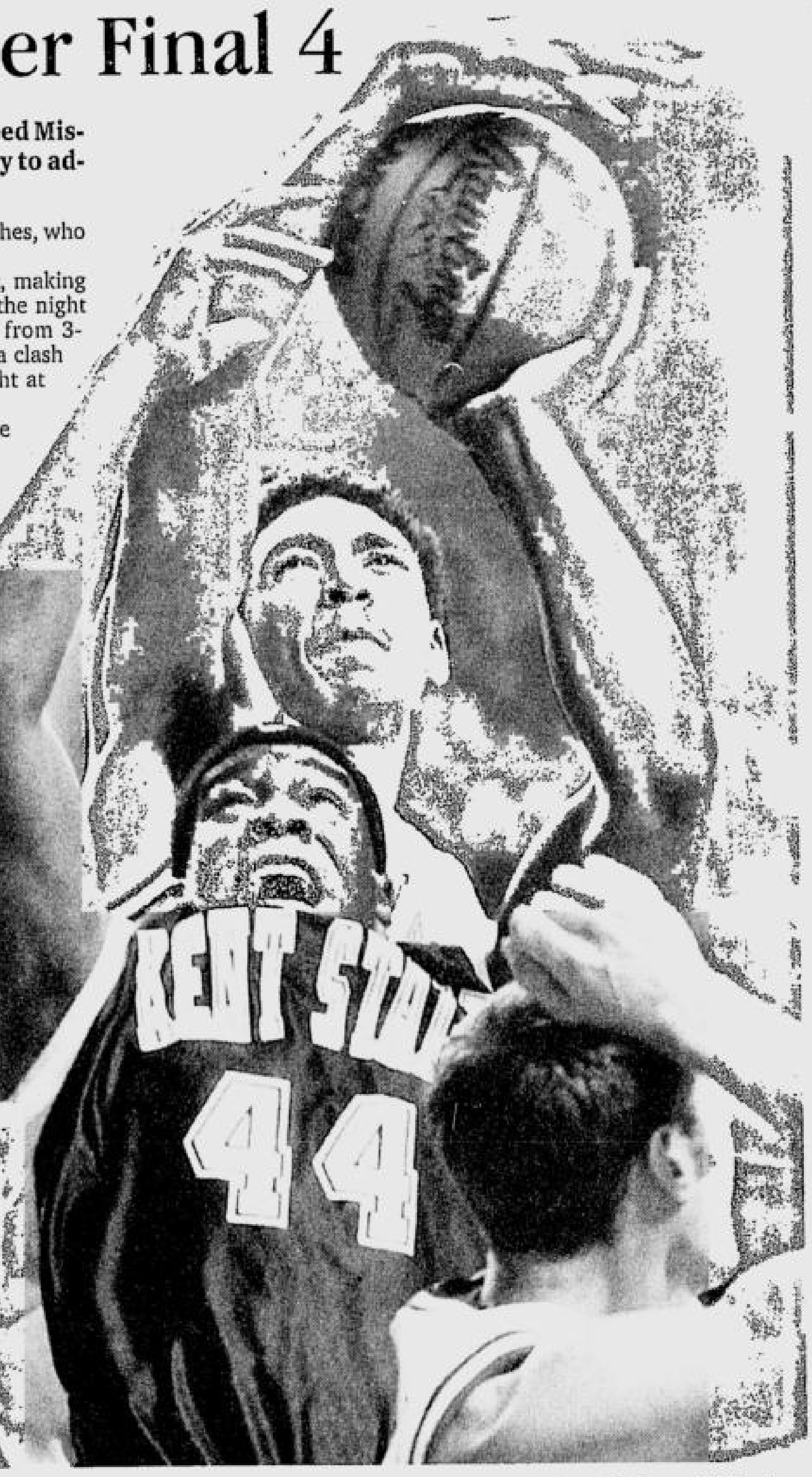
The win brought Indiana back to the national semifinals for the first time since 1992 and left the Hoosiers as the lowest seeded team still left in the tournament.

Indiana is looking for its sixth national title but first since 1987.

The Golden Flashes saw their nation-best 21 game winning streak end with the loss as Indiana gained a measure of revenge for its 77-73 loss to Kent State during the first round of last year's tournament.

Dane Fife led a balanced scoring attack for the Hoosiers with 17 points, while Kyle Hornsby added 16 points, Tom Cloverdale 14 and Jared Jeffries 10.

Cloverdale was the Regional MVP and he also added seven assists. *Reuters*



INDIANA'S Jared Jeffries (rear) foils a shot by Kent State's Antonio Gates (44) in the first half of their NCAA South Regional Championship at Rupp Arena in Lexington, Kentucky on Saturday. Indiana won, 81-69. AP

Sportshouse triumphs

SPORTSHOUSE upstaged favorite Jansport-Kickers, 89–85, to emerge as the first champion of the Burlington-Philippine Retailers Association Friendship Cup last Saturday at the Camp Crame gym.

MVP Jaime Valdez and co-mythical five members Mike Pentecoste and Nelvin David led the sports retail chain of Mars Chua against Jansport. David scored the last six points for Sportshouse.

Ruddy Tan, general manager of Burlington, and Evelyn Salire, executive director of PRA, awarded the trophy to the champion team.

Other winners were the Mr. Quickie women's duo who beat the Jansport tandem in the ladies' free throw shooting contest. Memory Magic finished third.

The Burlington -PRA cagefest is a special project of Total Events and Athlete Management (TEAM) Inc.

Blazers topple Timberwolves

MINNEAPOLIS—Damon Stoudamire scored 21 points, and Scottie Pippen added 18—13 in the fourth quarter—as the Portland Trail Blazers beat Minnesota, 108-99, Saturday night, moving ahead of the Timberwolves in the Western Conference standings.

The Blazers, a league-best 18-3 since the All-Star break, trailed by 10 at the half but got back into it by taking advantage of a balanced scoring attack and cold shooting by the Timberwolves.

Mavericks 111, Grizzlies 100

In Dallas, Dirk Nowitzki scored 24 points, and Michael Finley added 13 to surpass 10,000 for his career as Dallas completed a four-game season series sweep of Memphis.

Finley became the 238th NBA player to reach 10,000 points with an 18-foot jumper in the final minute of the first quarter.

Wang Zhizhi had a career-high 18 points, and Steve Nash scored 13 points for the Mavericks, who've won eight of 11 overall and 10 of 11 meetings against the Grizzlies.

Hawks 112, Bulls 96

In Atlanta, Jason Terry scored 23 points and matched a career-high with 13 assists as Atlanta beat Chicago.

The Hawks, playing without leading scorer and rebounder Shareef Abdur-Rahim, have won six of seven.

Atlanta had seven players score in double figures, including 17 from DerMarr Johnson and 16 for Alan Henderson, who made his first start of the season with Abdur-Rahim in California for the birth of his son. *AP*

Complete Results—Atlanta 112, Chicago 96; Portland 108, Minnesota 99; San Antonio 89, Miami 79; Dallas 111, Memphis 100; Utah 112, Golden State 103; Denver 88, Seattle 85; Phoenix 97, L.A. Clippers 94. *AP*

Jason Williams

NBA NOTES

Henry Liao

HE has the same name as the Memphis Grizzlies' "White Chocolate" and plays point guard like him. But this Jason Williams is a two-time first-team Associated Press All-American who is likely to give up his senior year of collegiate eligibility with Duke University and apply for early entry to the 2002 NBA draft in New York in June.

The 6-2 Williams is projected as the draft's prime prospect along with China's 7-5 mastodon Yao Ming.

Proof his worthiness, Williams was even named one of the two college alternates on the NBA-dominated US team to the World Basketball Championships in Indianapolis in late August this year. (Ten of the 12 roster spots have been filled by Boston's Paul Pierce, Cleveland's Andre Miller, Dallas' Raef LaFrentz and Michael Finley, Milwaukee's Ray Allen, Phoenix's Shawn Marion, Antonio Davis of Toronto, Jason Kidd of New Jersey and Reggie Miller and Jermaine O'Neal of Indiana.)

However, Williams' three-year collegiate tenure came to a disappointing end when his nationally top-ranked Blue Devils failed in their NCAA title-retention bid this season, losing to underdog Indiana, 74-73, in the South Regional semifinals of this one-loss-and-you're-out competition.

This overshadowed his stellar performance during the regular campaign when he averaged 21.7 points and 5.4 assists per game and emerged as the lone unanimous pick on AP's All-America First Team, which is also composed of Kansas junior forward draw Gooden, Cincinnati senior guard Steve Logan, Maryland senior guard Juan Dixon and Gonzaga senior guard DanDickau.

Already the recipient of the prestigious Naismith Award, Williams is expected to be a consensus selection as college basketball's top player this year. Should the cerebral floor leader do so, he would duplicate the feat of former Blue Devils mate Shane Battier, the 2001 NCAA tournament's Most Outstanding Player who is currently a productive NBA rookie with the Memphis Grizzlies.

Paulson wrests lead at Players meet

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida—On a day of scintillating shots and shocking collapses, Carl Paulson played a steady hand in The Players Championship and positioned himself for the biggest surprise of all.

Untested and relatively unknown, the 31-year-old Paulson posted a 3-under 69 Saturday for the third straight day to build a one-stroke lead over Craig Perks going into the final round of one of toughest and most exciting tests in golf.

Paulsôn was at 9-under 207 and will try to become the first player in the 28-year history of The Players Championship to earn his first victory at an event widely regarded as the fifth major.

But it is far from over.

Thirteen players were within six shots of the lead, including defending champion Tiger Woods, PGA champion David Toms, Mike Weir, Sergio Garcia and resurgent six-time major winner Nick Faldo.

If the names aren't frightening enough, the Stadium Course is intimidating.

"If you lose your focus at any point, you're going to make a big number," said Weir, who had a 68 and was at 211.

Agony is always right around the corner on the nasty TPC at Sawgrass, and there was plenty of evidence on a breezy, devilish afternoon. *AP*

Venus survives qualifier

KEY BISCAYNE, Florida—American Venus Williams touched a delicate drop shot on match point that floated over the net, kissed the court and bounced back toward her to beat pesky Eva Dyrberg of Denmark 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 Saturday at the Nasdaq-100 Open.

The match was the defending champion's first since Feb. 22, and the rust showed in her slow start and 40 unforced errors. Among the scattershot strokes was one serve that landed in front of the net.

"Too much spin," Williams explained with a sheepish laugh.

Also advancing in her opening match was No. 1-seeded American Jennifer Capriati, the current leader in her back-and-forth battle with Williams atop the WTA Tour rankings. She beat Eleni Daniilidou of Greece 6-0, 6-3. *AP*

Inkster loses, regains upper hand in Tucson

TUCSON, Arizona—Juli Inkster, stung by a bogey early on the back nine, recovered with an eagle two holes later and shot a 2-under-par 70 to retain the lead going into the final round of the Welch's-Circle K Classic.

Strong wind gusts made for tricky approach shots and putts Saturday, and Inkster's relatively bad score a day after shooting a 64 only cost her one stroke of what had been a three-shot lead. She tied Annika Sorenstam's 54-hole tournament record of 16-under 200.

Laura Diaz shot a 68 and Dorothy Delasin had a 69 to remain two shots behind the 41-year-old Inkster, the 1999 Tucson winner.

Sorenstam, the winner the last two years, made a strong charge to get into position for a run at her third title. The former University of Arizona star birdied six of the first 12 holes and finished with a 67, tied with Mi Hyun Kim (66) and Nancy Scranton (72) at 205.

The seven-player group at 206 included 1988 Tucson winner Laura Davies (70) and amateur Lorena Ochoa of Mexico, a sophomore at Arizona, who carded a 69. *AP*

PSC should divorce sports from politics

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

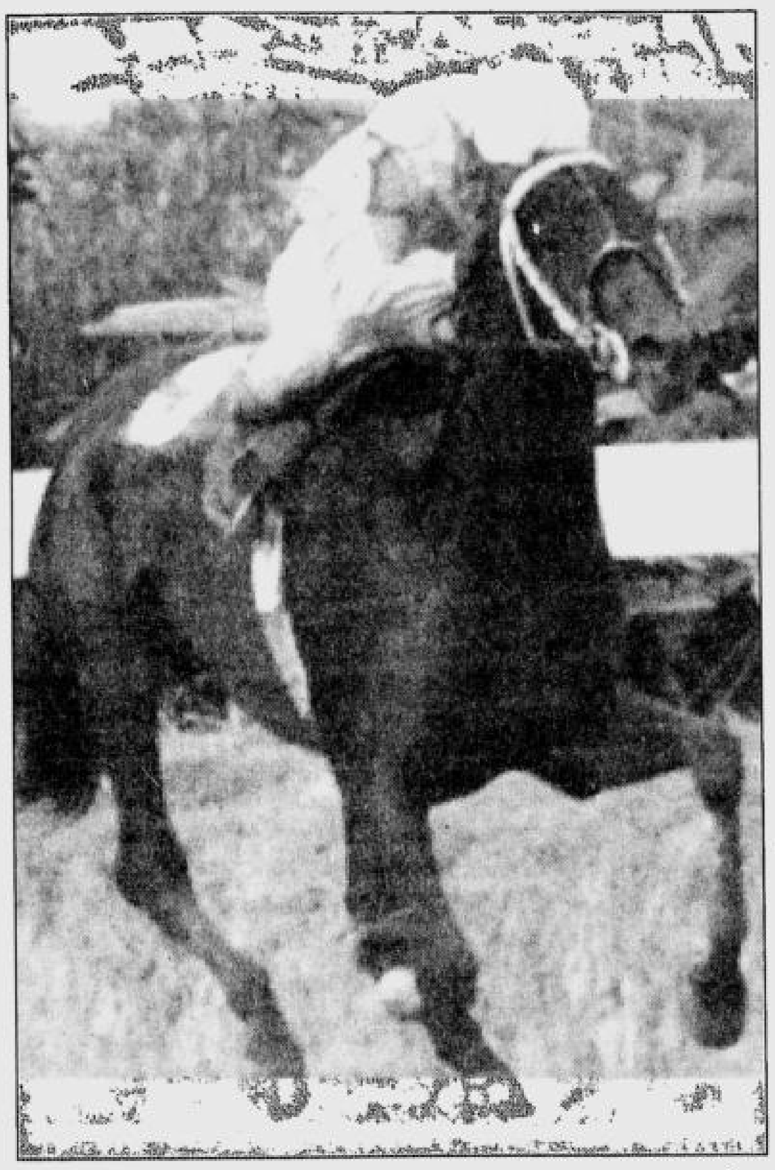
LAWYERS Ferdinand Topacio, former chair of the Manila Athletic Sports Council, is appealing to the Philippine Sports Commission to divorce sports from politics starting with Manila's claim to recover the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, saying, "it is my hope that the PSC will find the decency not to resist these moves by the city as the same is founded on its proprietary rights."

In a letter to this corner, Topacio, who is also a former assistant secretary for local government of the Department of Interior, said he was commending efforts of the present administration of the city of Manila, specially Councilor Don Bagatsing, to recover the RMSC, adding that he had made similar efforts when he was chair of the Manila Athletic Sports Council in 1994 under then Mayor Alfredo Lim.

During their time, however, he stressed the fact that even though the RMSC was in their jurisdiction, they had "to literally beg—and then pay through the nose—to be able to use its facilities to train our athletes, who most of the time had to contend with the inadequate San Andres Sports Complex for their requirements.'

Topacio also said that it was "not possible to push too far with the idea (of reclaiming the RMSC), notwithstanding the legal bases, as the head of the PSC then was former Manila Mayor Mel Lopez, a political rival of Mayor Lim, and our efforts toward that end was painted by some as politically motivated (although nothing can be farther from the truth)."

The former Masco chair also said that with the "unfortunate political configuration which attended our efforts then no longer existing now, the endeavors to restore the RMSC to the city of Manila, to which it rightfully belongs, will be visited with success."



JESS YUSON

TRIPLE CROWN HOPE

Unbreakable, with Pat Dilema aboard, soloes it home in the Chairman's Cup race yesterday at the Santa Ana Park. The three-year-old bay colt sired by Say the Truth out of Brazen Star won P600,000. What A Spell was second, while favorite Golden Ballet finished only third, her winning run halted at seven. With the victory, Unbreakable loomed as a strong contender for this year's Triple Crown series. Unbreakable timed a fast 1:42 flat (24.5-25.5.24-28) in the 1,600-meter race.

RICHEST RACE

Street Cry captures Dubai World Cup

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Godolphin Racing won the richest horse race in the world Saturday, the $6-million Dubai World Cup, but not with the horse everyone expected.

Street Cry, a lightly raced 4-year-old, was guided to the rail at the top of the stretch by jockey Jerry Bailey, drove to the lead in a flash and never looked back, winning by more than four lengths.

Among the trailing horses was favorite Sakhee, who finished third. Longshot Sei Mi came running late for second, but never threatened the ultra-impressive winner.

The win, worth $3.6 million, was the fourth World Cup victory for Bailey, and the fourth for the Al Maktoum family.

The winning time, 2 minutes, 1.18 seconds, didn't threaten the track record of Godolphin's Dubai Millennium, but was more than enough to stamp Street Cry as one of the top older horses in the world.

Sensing that the home team had the race in the bag, the crowd at Nad al Sheba Racecourse cheered Street Cry every step of the way down the long stretch, then mobbed the Maktoum brothers as they walked to the winners' circle.

The Godolphin stable is the deepest in the world, and the seventh annual World Cup showed that the 2002 season may be their best yet.

"The Breeders' Cup Classic is the ultimate goal for Street Cry," stable manager Simon Crisford said. He added that Sakhee is likely to return to the grass, his preferred surface.

The strapping dark brown colt had spent his 2-year-old season in the United States, capping off the year with a strong third in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile, and was on track to contest the 2001 Kentucky Derby, but suffered an ankle injury a week before the race.

"We gave him plenty of time to recover and he has matured beautifully," winning trainer Saeed bin Suroor said.

The win gives the son of Machiavellian four wins in 10 career starts and earnings just under $4.5 million.

Earlier, Godolphin's $2.3 million 3-year-old Essence of Dubai rallied from last in a 14-horse field to win the $2 million, 1-1/4 mile UAE Derby.

Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and head of Godolphin Racing, has made no secret of his desire to win the Kentucky Derby. He decided to lengthen the UAE Derby from 1-1/8 mile to 1-1/4 mile this year in order to get a better gauge on the stamina of his 3-year-olds, and Saturday's result made the controversial decision look like a stroke of genius.

A son of Pulpit out of Breeders' Cup winning mare Epitome, Essence of Dubai and jockey Frankie Dettori needed all of the lengthy stretch to get by Gary Stevens aboard the Chilean-bred Total Impact.

The final time was a strong 2.02.90, and the official winning margin half a length. It was another two and a half lengths back to the third place finisher, Ibn Al Haitham, also a Godolphin colt who campaigned in America in 2001. Both colts are trained by Saeed bin Suroor.

Crisford had indicated earlier in the week that Essence of Dubai still had much to prove before they would decide to send him to Kentucky.

"That was something, no? We always knew he was bred to get the distance, but he had to show it today. It's awfully nice to see him do it like that. Sheik Mohammed makes the final decision, but I think we'll be headed to the Derby," Crisford said. **AP**

Don Juan for the needy

ONE WINNER

Edwin Villanueva

THE NEWLY formed Klub Don Juan de Manila is a welcome boon to local racing.

It's name may sound elitist but the group was organized mainly to help the industry's various sectors, especially the needy.

Even *kareristas* are expected to benefit from Klub Don Juan de Manila because one of its immediate goals is to conciliate the betting public's clamor for well-organized major races.

Through these races, Klub Don Juan, a non-profit, non stock group, is expected to raise funds which it will use to serve its purpose.

We salute Mikey Arroyo for taking the initiative to form the club which was named after the unbeaten post-war galloper Don Juan.

Mikey has been very busy as vice governor of Pampanga but if he has the time, he makes it a point to be at Santa Ana or San Lazaro and watch some of his horses whom he co-owns (*kasosyo*).

Maybe only a few know that Mikey, 32, is a third-generation member of the Arroyo-Tuason horse racing clan.

The family-owned LTA Corp. has been a part of the industry for so many years now and at present, its blue and white silks still grace the tracks through horses like Samahan and Kakampi.

"Kaya pala malapit siya (Mikey) *sa karera*," said my Silip Boy, adding he's sure President Gloria and husband Mike are very proud to have a son who's also into the sports of kings.

Yaptangco-Veloso ahead by 1 stroke

PLAYING lightning-fast greens a newly-crowned Philippine Open champion described as "the best in the world," Alex Yaptangco and Ramon Veloso took the headstart in a virtual putting contest as they grabbed a one-point overall lead after the completion of the first round of play in the sixth Sta. Elena Cup in Cabuyao, Laguna.

Competing in Class C, Yaptangco came through with a day-best 44 points and Veloso tallied 36 for 80 points that put them on top of the 220-team field in the member-guest invitational of the prestigious Sta. Elena Golf Club.

The chase for the Sta. Elena Cup remained tight going into the weekend battle as Class A leaders William Bailey and Jonathan Thorp stayed just a point behind at 79 and 10 teams just five points or less adrift.

This year's Sta. Elena Cup is sponsored by world cellular phone leader Nokia, adidas Taylor Made, the International Container Terminal Services Inc., Royal Carribean Cruise and Northwest Airlines.

A seven-night Royal Carribean cruise will be the main prize in tonight's awarding ceremonies on top of cash jackpots worth P500,000 and P300,000 and more than a million pesos worth of merchandise.

Rick Gibson, recent winner of the Philippine Open and a Sta. Elena member who got so impressed with the greens he called them "the best I've seen," has also been invited to grace the awards rites where a seafood festival specially prepared by the club's topnotch chefs will be served.

Manoling Chan and Juami Rocha grabbed the low gross lead with their similar rounds of two-over-par 74.

Trailing Bailey-Thorp in Class A were Mike Romulo and Tonton Asistio (78), Peter Chan-Dick Tan Yu (77) and Chan-Rocha (75).

The Class B leadership, meanwhile, went to Jamias Kasigod and Peping Cedo who had 76, a point ahead of Edward Tin and William Di and two points clear of Telesforo Gana-Ricky de Castro and Fely Lopez-Jan Golez.

Yaptangco and Veloso will play their weekend round five points ahead of Senen Matoto and Cookie LaO with the teams of Jimmy Sy-Aris San Agustin, Fred De Veyra-Jimmy Bautista, Francisco Colayco-Ricardo Alarilla and Andy Co-Virgilio Co sharing third at 73.

Elorde Annual Awards tonight

THE 2001 Gabriel Flash Elorde Boxing Annual Awards gets under way tonight, with 14 world and international champions led by Boxer of the Year Manny Pacquiao, and 18 Philippine Champions to be honored in formal ceremonies at the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Intercontinental.

National security adviser Roilo Golez and Laura Elorde, wife of the former world junior champion in whose memory the awards are given, will confer boxing's highest honor on Pacquiao, the International Boxing Federation world superbantamweight champion in 2001 during ceremonies coinciding with the 67th birth anniversary of the longest reigning world junior lightweight champion.

Gerry Peñalosa, the WBC Internationals upperflyweight champion in 2001, leads the year's world and international champions who will receive major awards.

Also to receive major awards are 18 Philippine champions led by superflyweight Randy Suico, lightweight Dennis Laurente and superflyweight Dindo Castanares who retained their title for 12 months in 2001.

Former WBA bantamweight and WBC featherweight champion Luisito Espinosa, former WBC and WBA flyweight title holder Erbito Salavarria and former IBF miniflyweight king Eric Chavez will be honored as former champions.

Jose Sulaiman, president of the World Boxing Council, leads honorees of special awards.

The Awards Night will be telecast on IBC 123 Wednesday at 7 p.m. with replay on April 1.

SCOOTER SERIES

Santiago scores twice

CARMONA, Cavite—Ivan Santiago proved himself worthy of joining the ranks of champions, posting back-to-back triumphs before a big weekend crowd at the start of the 2002 Shell Advance Super Scooter Series at the Carmona Racing Circuit here recently.

Unfazed by the presence of defending champion Jaime Barcial and multititled Jolet Jao in the starting grid, Santiago swept to victor in the opening leg and the early lead in this prestigious series organized by the E.L.Racing Tech in cooperation with Shell Advance scooter oil.

The win was a fitting follow-up to Santiago's similar successful campaign in the Mayor Benhur Abalos Cup motorcycle and scooter competition held at the Liberty Center in Mandaluyong City last month.

Santiago completed a double celebration by also winning the 70cc category over Albert Sarmiento, Michael Cantro, Randy Ortiz and Jojo Reyes.

Shell brand manager for motocycle oil Serge Bernal awarded the trophies and cash prizes to the winners, assisted by Shell-Yamaha motocross team captain and event organizer Ernie Leongson and race director Elson Carpio.

Zentrex opens

GAMEWORX Inc. opened the Zentrex Center for Excellence recently at the fourth level of Festival Supermall, Filinvest Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Zentrex offers courses in karatedo, judo, karaobics, aerobics, discorobix and weight and body building.

"We are proud to unveil our newest attraction here at GameworX. I'm inviting all fitness enthusiasts to visit us," said GameworX marketing manager Christian Datol.

Shell-Yamaha shines

SHELL-Yamaha lived up to its billing as the county's winningest motocross team, dominating six of 10 categories in the kickoff leg of the National Motocross Championships 2002 in Passi, Iloilo.

Ernie Leongson ruled the pro open, Jovie Saulog topped the pro 125, Pepo Rubi copped the expert and Samuel Tamayo dominated the power enduro, open production and beginner production categories in a Shell-Yamaha day of triumph in this annual series organized by the Hartebeest Entertainment Corp.

Leongson, who is best remembered for winning the prestigious Saipan Open last year, made his presence felt anew and took the early lead in the pro open category with 34 points.

Saulog, the only seven-time winner in local motocross history, and Leongson also finished 1-2 in the pro 125 class to show the way in the overall standings with 37 and 34 points, respectively.

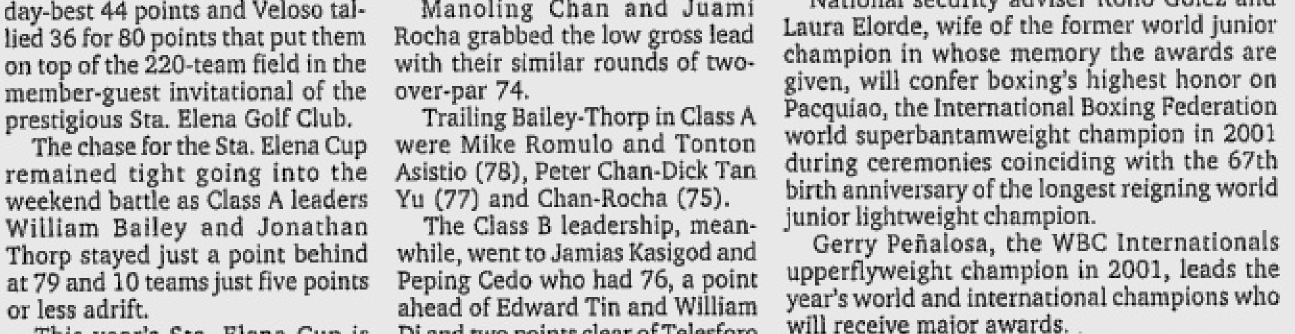
Rubi, one of the most experienced members of the team, swept both heats to garner a perfect score of 40 points in the expert category.

4-cock derby today

COCKING aficionados will be treated to no less than 60 exciting fights with the holding of the Intrepid 4-Cock Derby today the Roll-IBM Cockpit in Parañaque City.

Hosted by popular cockers Voltaire Fronda, Edward Guanco and Tony Marfori, these breathtaking duels of feathered gladiators have a cash prize of P300,000 for a P10,000 pot money.

Respected cocker-breeders in Metro Manila and nearby provinces have confirmed their participation in these pitfights. For inquiries call 833-16-38 or 833-22-75.



TAEKWONDO CHAMPS

The Letran seniors and juniors taekwondo teams were adjudged overall champions in the recent 77th NCAA taekwondo championships at the PCU gym along Taft Avenue. Shown are medalists (standing from right)Antonio Anibigno III, Gerald Herrera, Juan Paolo Sarmenta, Allen Chris Casimiro, Yascher Malik, Dean Limbo, Reden Don Abratique, Danniel Galvez, Jim Josef Good, Winston Quioyu, Christopher Andrew Gonzales, Clement Yumul, Seychelles Haddley Ramos, and Arman Joseph Juanitas. Squatting (from right) are Allison Evangelista, Jose Krisson Diaz, Emman Joseph Pineda and Hayato Nihara. The coaches are Anthony Ong, Angelito Ong and Rodolfo Abratique.

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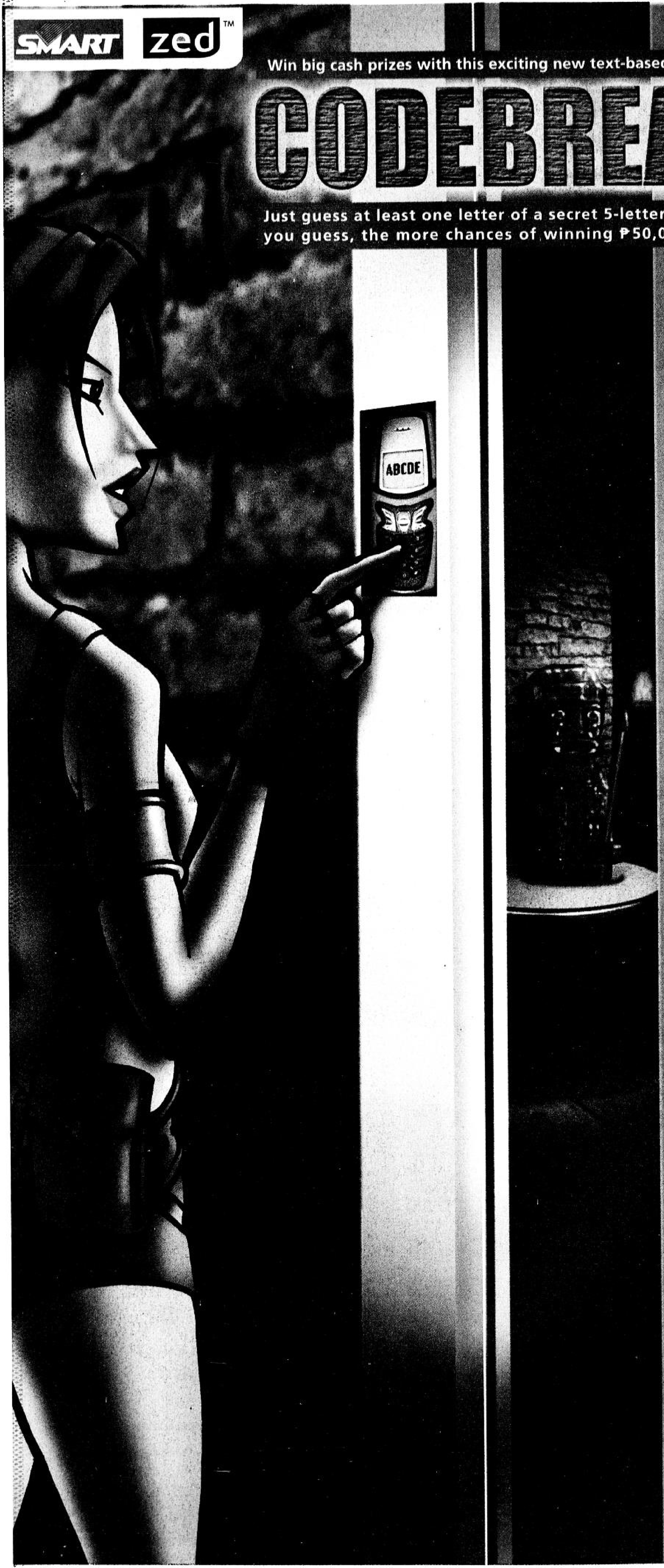

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Mechanics of SMART zed Codebreaker Promo

1. SMART Gold, SMART Buddy, and Talk n Text subscribers should register in order to qualify for the raffle. To register, send CB REG Name/Address/Sex/Birthday <MMDDYY> to 288. For example, CB REG Alan Acosta/6th Flr. Star Bldg 160 Edsa, Pasay City/M/072379. Once registered, the user can start playing Codebreaker by sending CB NEW to 288.
2. The objective is to earn as much raffle entries by breaking your secret code. If one of your letters matches a letter in the secret code in the correct position, you earn one raffle entry.
3. No two players will have the same 5-letter secret code.
4. The secret code can have repeating letters. For example, CCXMM.
5. There is no limit to the number of codes a player can download a day.
6. You must send your 5-letter guess by using only the 26 letters of the alphabet. You only need to send 5 letters.
7. Once you get a letter and its position correct, SMART zed will inform you via a text message.
8. A prize of ₱50,000 will be raffled every week. The more raffle entries you have the greater chance of winning.
9. Weekly winners will be notified through a congratulatory text message, a call and registered mail.
10. Each successful message sent will cost ₱2.50.
11. Prizes are to be claimed at Ace Saatchi & Saatchi Advertising, 10th Flr. Feliza Building 108 Herrera St. Legaspi Village, Makati City. To claim the prize, the winner must be able to present the congratulatory text message, notification letter and any valid ID. Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days after receipt of notification will be forfeited with the prior approval of DTI.
12. Employees of SMART Communications, iA3 Inc., Sonera zed, PILTEL Telecoms Specialists Inc., and their respective advertising agencies, as well as non-revenue SMART special subscribers, including their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promotion.
13. Promo period is from March 24 to May 26, 2002.

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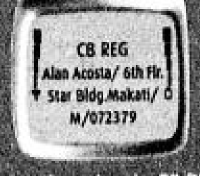

To register, key in CB REG Name/Address/Sex/Birthday and send to 288.

How to play:

To start playing, key in CB NEW and send to 288.

To get a new code, key in CB NEW and send to 288.
To download the rules of the game, key in CB RULES and send to 288

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METRO

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Bomb scare connected to Rizal Day blasts, says intelligence man

POLICE AND 'PALASPAS'
Twelve Manila policemen dressed as Jesus' apostles, together with other members of the Western Police District, have their palms blessed by a priest at the WPD headquarters. The ritual reenacts Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem just before the beginning of his Passion. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

By Philip C. Tubeza and Christian V. Esguerra

A MUSLIM secessionist group responsible for the Rizal Day bombings in December 2001 is behind the recent bomb scare, according to an intelligence officer.

"We believe (the recent bomb scare) is somehow connected to the Rizal Day bombings," the intelligence officer said. "The same pattern is there. They're again going

BOMB SCARE/ A23

■ Naia 3 project won't fly, says Pasay council /A23

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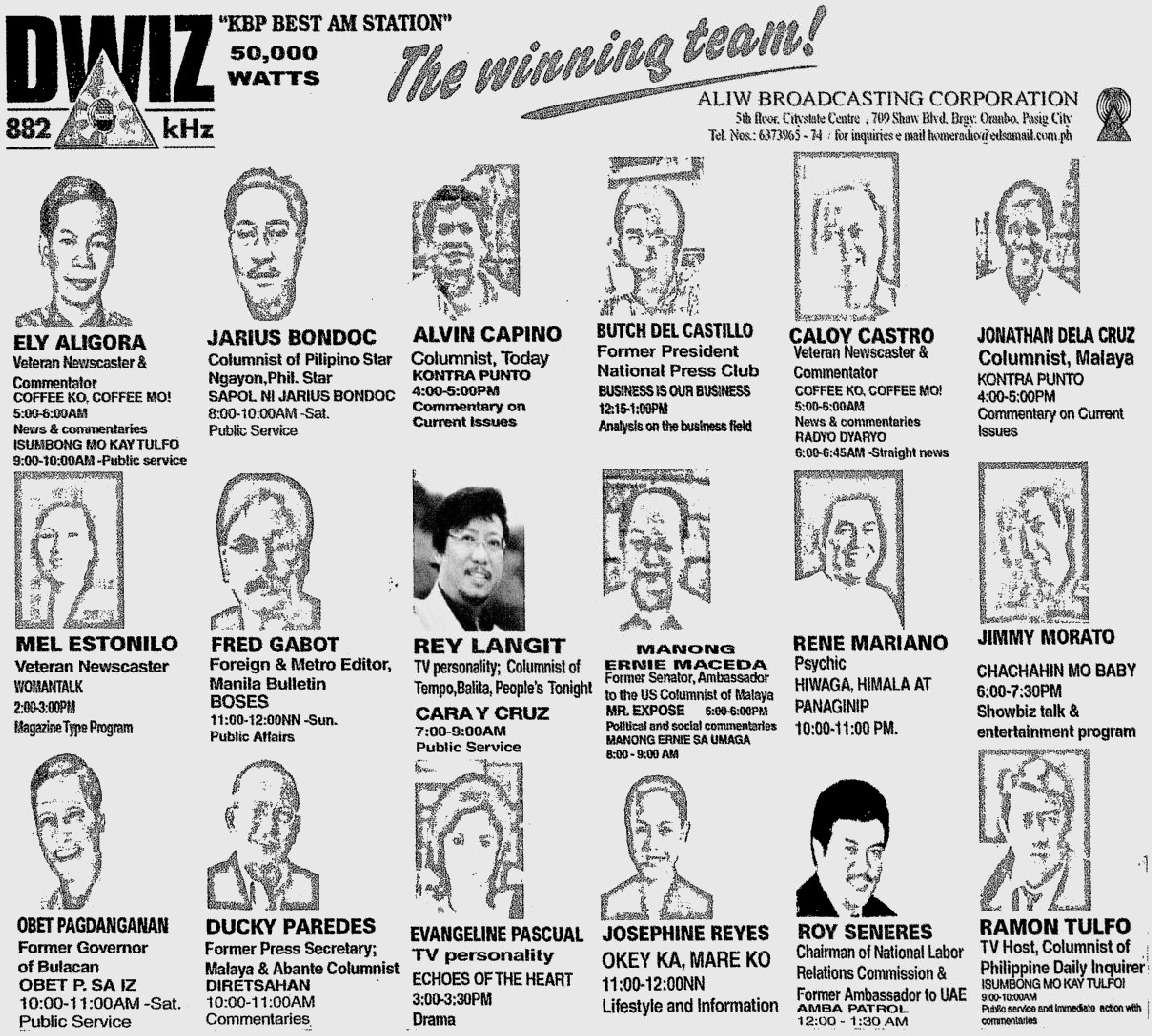

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12:15-1:00PM
Analysis on the business field

CALOY CASTRO
Veteran Newscaster & Commentator
COFFEE KO, COFFEE MO!
5:00-6:00AM
News & commentaries
RADYO DYARYO
6:00-6:45AM -Straight news

JONATHAN DELA CRUZ
Columnist, Malaya
KONTRA PUNTO
4:00-5:00PM
Commentary on Current Issues

MEL ESTONILO
Veteran Newscaster
WOMANTALK
2:00-3:00PM
Magazine Type Program

FRED GABOT
Foreign & Metro Editor, Manila Bulletin
BOSES
11:00-12:00NN -Sun.
Public Affairs

REY LANGIT
TV personality; Columnist of Tempo,Balita, People's Tonight
CARA Y CRUZ
7:00-9:00AM
Public Service

MANONG ERNIE MACEDA
Former Senator, Ambassador to the US Columnist of Malaya
MR. EXPOSE 5:00-6:00PM
Political and social commentaries
MANONG ERNIE SA UMAGA
8:00 - 9:00 AM

RENE MARIANO
Psychic
HIWAGA, HIMALA AT PANAGINIP
10:00-11:00 PM.

JIMMY MORATO
CHACHAHIN MO BABY
6:00-7:30PM
Showbiz talk & entertainment program

OBET PAGDANGANAN
Former Governor of Bulacan
OBET P. SA IZ
10:00-11:00AM -Sat.
Public Service

DUCKY PAREDES
Former Press Secretary; Malaya & Abante Columnist
DIRETSAHAN
10:00-11:00AM
Commentaries

EVANGELINE PASCUAL
TV personality
ECHOES OF THE HEART
3:00-3:30PM
Drama

JOSEPHINE REYES
OKEY KA, MARE KO
11:00-12:00NN
Lifestyle and Information

ROY SENERES
Chairman of National Labor Relations Commission & Former Ambassador to UAE
AMBA PATROL
12:00 - 1:30 AM

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TV Host, Columnist of Philippine Daily Inquirer
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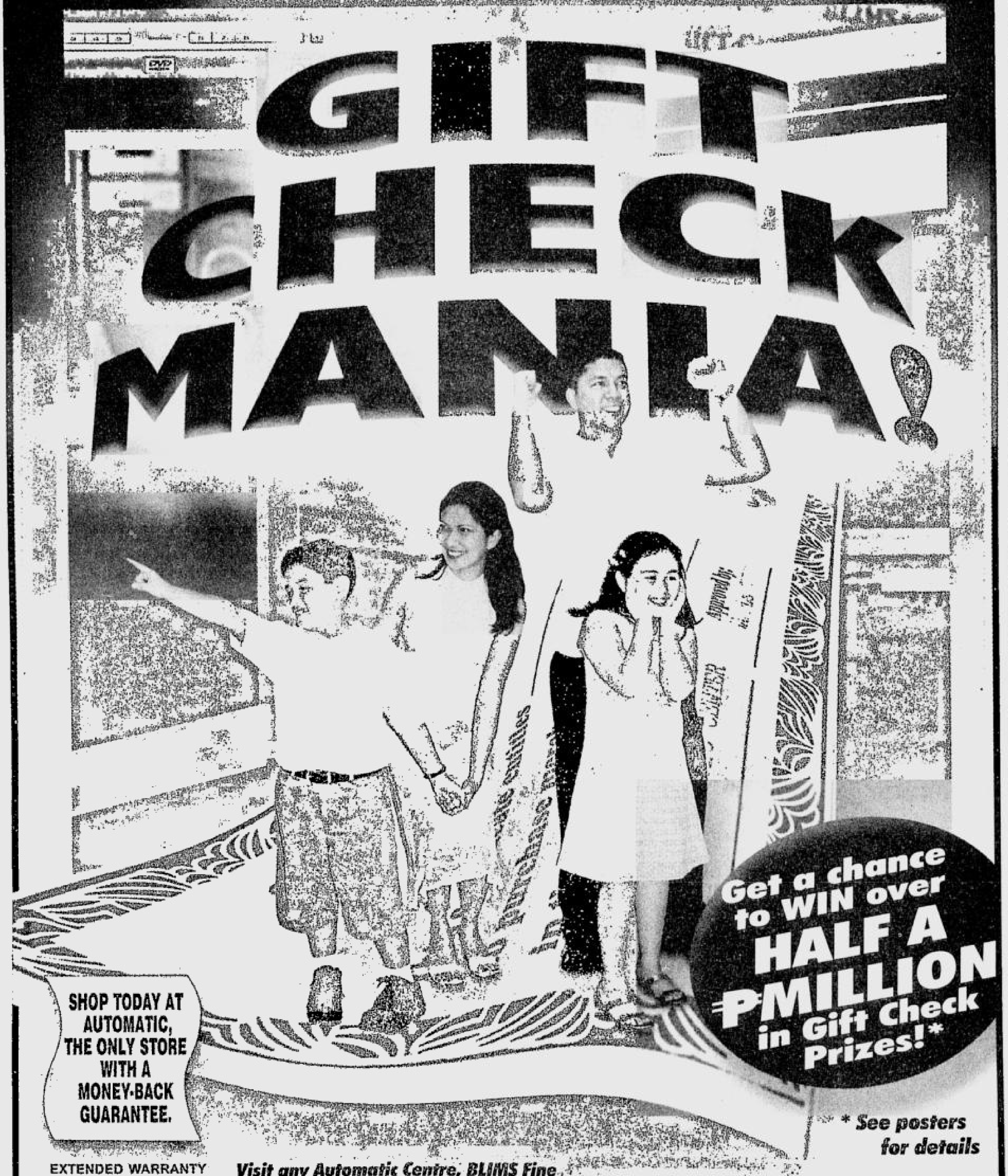
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'Abakada' spells big triumph

By Alex Y. Vergara

EDDIE Garcia (third from left) clutches the FAP trophies for best director and best picture, both for "Abakada. . . Ina." The other grinning winners are (from left) best supporting actress Caridad Sanchez, best actor Ricky Davao, best actress Lorna Tolentino and best supporting actor Dante Rivero.

JOAN BONDOC

EDDIE Garcia's directorial comeback, "Abakada...Ina," won the lion's share of awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, at the 20th Film Academy of the Philippines awards held Saturday night at the University of the Philippines Theater.

Produced by Viva Films, the domestic drama revolves around the travails of an illiterate mother who struggles to assert herself and gain some self-respect by teaching herself how to read and write. Lead star Lorna Tolentino agreed to look dowdy on screen to play the part. Her efforts paid off with a Best Actress award, her third such trophy from industry peers.

The film also won Best Original Screenplay (Shaira Salvador and Ramon Bayron), Best Sound Engineer (Roel Bruan), Best Film Editing (Ike Jarlego Jr.) and Best Cinematography (Romulo Araojo).

"People close to me had discouraged me from doing this project," said Tolentino in Filipino, "because it would mean projecting a less glamorous image of myself onscreen...*Nanay* Lolit (talent manager Lolit Solis) please don't get angry at me anymore if I accept projects that will make me look ugly."

Tolentino also dedicated the award to her family, especially to husband and "*kasangga*" Rudy Fernandez. The veteran actress edged out fellow veterans Amy Austria and Maricel Soriano and newcomers Mylene Dizon and Assunta de Rossi for the top acting plum.

Indeed, it was a night of veteran performers as Ricky Davao (Best Actor, "Minsan, May Isang Puso"), Dante Rivero (Best Supporting Actor, "Tuhog") and Caridad Sanchez (Best Supporting Actress, "Bagong Buwan") won over younger and less experienced colleagues in their categories.

The audience fell silent when an emotional Sanchez accepted her trophy. "Life they say is like the movies," she said in Filipino, her voice cracking. "The reason I'm crying is I was supposed to go to Cebu today to attend my sister's burial. But I also want to be here because I wanted to win. I would like to share this award with my late sister, the family's biggest movie fan. *Manang* Nena, this is for you."

Nida Blanca's bereaved daughter Kay Torres and mother Inocencia Acueza graced the affair to accept a posthumous Lifetime Achievement award for Blanca. Investigators have yet to come up with solid leads almost five months after the veteran actress and one-time movie queen was brutally slain.

"I'm praying that my mom will get the justice she deserves after her gruesome murder," a composed Torres said in Filipino. "I hope her 50 years in show biz wouldn't have ended in vain...Justice for Nida!"

Another veteran actress and Blanca's erstwhile rival in the 1950s, Gloria Romero, also received a Lifetime Achievement award. Fernando Poe Jr., another institution in local films, earned a Golden Reel award from his peers.

Key players in the infamous 1994 Manila Film Festival scam also had a reunion of sorts, with the exception of Gabby Concepcion and Lolit Solis. Ruffa Gutierrez, Nannette Medved and whistleblower Gretchen Barretto were present.

The semi-retired but still glamorous Baretto opened the show in an asymmetric peach number with a willowy extension by Inno Sotto. For her efforts, the comeback star ran away with the "Celebrity Look of the Night" award.

"I haven't been in awards night in seven years," said Barretto, her last being the Manila Film Festival. "It's so good to see everybody here. It's like being home again."

Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. seemed like the odd-man-out in the presence of pro-Erap co-hosts Phillip Salvador and Lorna Tolentino. Revilla and Salvador's indifference was palpable during station breaks. ***(More stories this week in the Entertainment and Lifestyle pages).***

FAP insiders said Salvador, who's poised to make a show biz comeback after losing in his vice mayoral bid in Mandaluyong last May, nearly backed out after learning of Revilla's participation. At the height of Edsa 2, Revilla switched sides from Erap to then-Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. He eventually lost his reelection bid for governor of Cavite.

The evening's other big winners were Judy Lou de Pio, Best Production Design, "Bagong Buwan;" Blitz Padua, Best Musical Score, "Parehas ang Laban;" and Tony Cortez, Best Theme Song, "Susmaryosep." "Ulirat" won Best Film in the student category.

Naia 3 project won't fly, says Pasay council

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE PASAY City council yesterday threatened to file charges against airport officials if they continue to snub the local government in the ongoing construction of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3.

"We'll definitely go to court if they would keep on bypassing us," said Councilor Allan Panaligan, chair of the city council's committees on engineering and public works and on land use and patrimony.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, Panaligan yesterday said the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) has been holding the city government "hostage" in the airport project.

He said MIAA has been asking the city council to issue a certificate of no objection, though airport officials have yet to complete the requirements.

He said MIAA's strategy was to seek the national government's approval and draw public acceptance of the Terminal 3 project before consulting the local government.

"What if Pasay rejects it for valid reasons," Panaligan asked. "It would appear that we're antagonizing the project and going against public perception."

He said his committees would stand by whatever position it would agree on after conducting public hearings.

He said that "since time immemorial," MIAA has been bypassing the local government in the implementation of projects.

Airport officials are in a race against time to complete the Terminal 3 project by December to avoid paying huge amounts as penalty in case of delay, he said.

The city council is looking into complaints that the transfer of the aviation gas depot from the Naia compound to Barangay 201, and that the construction of transmission lines in Villamor would endanger the lives of Pasay residents.

"If the concerns would prove to be correct, we would definitely stand by the position of our constituents and reject the airport project," said Panaligan.

Russel Crowe ahead as Oscars outshine NBA

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(HAPPY WAIT: From Malacañang, very reliable sources say MMDA Chair Ben Abalos will be plucked from his trashy post for a bigger, more challenging assignment. The President, the tip goes, needs and trusts the father of Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos that much. But what has truly excited Palace watchers is this one about former Marikina Mayor Bayani Fernando finally getting the nod from that power base by the Pasig. They say BF, who has converted once-messy Marikina into a dream town, is a shoo-in to take over at MMDA. Fernando's countless fans and believers, including this reporter, are just waiting to holler and applaud. We could not think of any better man for the post.)

***

SO what if Michael Jordan does not succeed in leading the Washington Wizards to the NBA play-offs? No hard feelings. His Airness, after all, has more than proven his point: A good player, despite tired, overused tendons, can still cast a spell given Mr. Jordan's legendary skills.

If he were in the acting profession, Jordan would have garnered more than his earthly share of best actor trophies.

They are not talking basketball out there.

The ugly tip, as traced by Time Magazine, says either Denzel Washington ("Training Day") or Will Smith ("Ali") must snatch the Oscar best actor trophy today.

Otherwise, the Oscars would be shoved and slurred as anti-black.

***

It's that time of the year and they're fighting—and biting—for the choices, richest cinema arts awards this side of Universal.

In fact, "A Beautiful Mind," easily the year's most beautiful film, has gotten its hefty share of back stabs.

There's also the danger of the year's finest performance by a male actor being smeared and slashed.

By the way, Oscar winners, not unlike in dirty politics, are voted in by a horde of judges numbering close to 6,000.

***

So it seems the only certainty here is that moviegoers would feel jilted, if not entirely disappointed, if Washington or Smith upsets the outstanding favorite in the Oscars best actor race.

Russel Crowe last year walked away with the same plum for his power-punch performance as Maximus in "Gladiator."

But compared to this year's John Nash in "A Beautiful Mind," the Crowe who won the Oscar last year was a brawling, budding neophyte. Pitting the two Crowe characters against each other could be like comparing "Catcher in the Rye" to Dante's "Inferno."

Crowe this time is steady, firm, a full-throated descendant of the young, tormented but very aesthetic Richard Burton.

Crowe had held on without a slip that, when the credits started rolling on the screen, moviegoers rose limp, misty-eyed. Informed and uplifted, if you please.

If there's a movie equivalent of what the Greeks originally called catharsis, Crowe must've brought it down in a wholesome heap on the stunned rows in his masterful portrayal of a tormented genius.

***

Well, the soundest question asked when desk editors of this paper tried to play movie critics around the conference table last week was this:

Given the usual challenge, is there another performance greater than the one perfected by Rowe in this year's Oscars?

A momentary pause and the editors all shook their heads. None, so far.

Nobody, it seemed, could be at par with Crowe.

In fact, they were saying Crowe, in rising to a new level, appeared to have out-parred himself.

***

There were audible cries when Robert de Niro, picked early as a frontrunner like Crowe this year, lost the best actor plum despite his command performance in "Awakening."

It was ably explained that De Niro had lost because the role was perfectly tailored for him, or something to that effect.

A most stinging upset felt by this random moviegoer was the one suffered by Allan Arkin, ("The Heart is a Lonely Hunter") who was edged out by Cliff Robertson ("Charlie") in the late '60s.

But either Smith or Washington outstaging Crowe?

The boxing biopic would've had a chance if the movie starred the real-life Muhammad Ali himself.

***

Of course, Crowe is not without a problem.

It was reported that, after being named best actor by the British Academy of Film and Arts, Crowe next lost his cool after BBC edited out a final poem portion of his acceptance speech.

The fellow had exceeded allotted time.

In a subsequent dinner, Crowe reportedly cornered and shoved the show producer.

The best actor awardee was next caught explaining that he had been too passionate in making his point.

But if, say, Crowe fails to win his second straight Oscar, I would return to the moviehouse to see what went wrong. I doubt I would be able to find out.

'Serbilis Center' opens in Makati

THE NATIONAL Statistics Office has opened a "Serbilis Center" in Makati City to release copies of civil documents to the public, according to Mayor Jejomar Binay.

The Serbilis Center is on the third floor of the new Makati City Hall on J. P. Rizal Street in Barangay Poblacion. It will process applications for certification of birth, death, marriage, and no-marriage.

Makati is one of the first local government units to set up an NSO extension office, said Binay.

Bomb scare connected ...

From page A21

around Metro Manila."

Before Dec. 30, 2001 bombings, explosives were also found in different places in the capital, the officer noted.

Like the bombs found last week in Metro Manila and other parts of the country, some of the bombs found before the Rizal Day bombings were duds, he said.

He said the Indigenous People's Federal Army (Ipfa), which has claimed responsibility for the bombs found in Metro Manila and other parts of the country last week, might only be a front of the secessionist group.

The rebel group is just testing the response of law enforcers to bomb threats before they launch a deadly bombing blitz, the officer said.

None of the bombs found last week exploded. Authorities said they were not meant to explode.

"They're trying to condition the minds of the police that these bombs are fakes, until the police become lax," the officer said.

A total of 22 people were killed in the Rizal Day bombings in Metro Manila. Bombs exploded at the LRT Blumentritt station, the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, near the Dusit Hotel in Makati, in a bus terminal in Cubao, and at Plaza Ferguson in front of the US Embassy.

A Muslim secessionist group was believed to have been responsible for the bombings.

The intelligence officer admitted they were surprised when Ifpa claimed responsibility for the bombs found last week.

"We were taken by surprise when they surfaced," he said.

But Ipfa manifestos calling for a federal form of government were not found with all the bombs planted in Metro Manila, he observed.

"They came out later," he said. "So again, this might be a different group but we are not discounting the possibility that this is also a front organization of the (Muslim secessionists)."

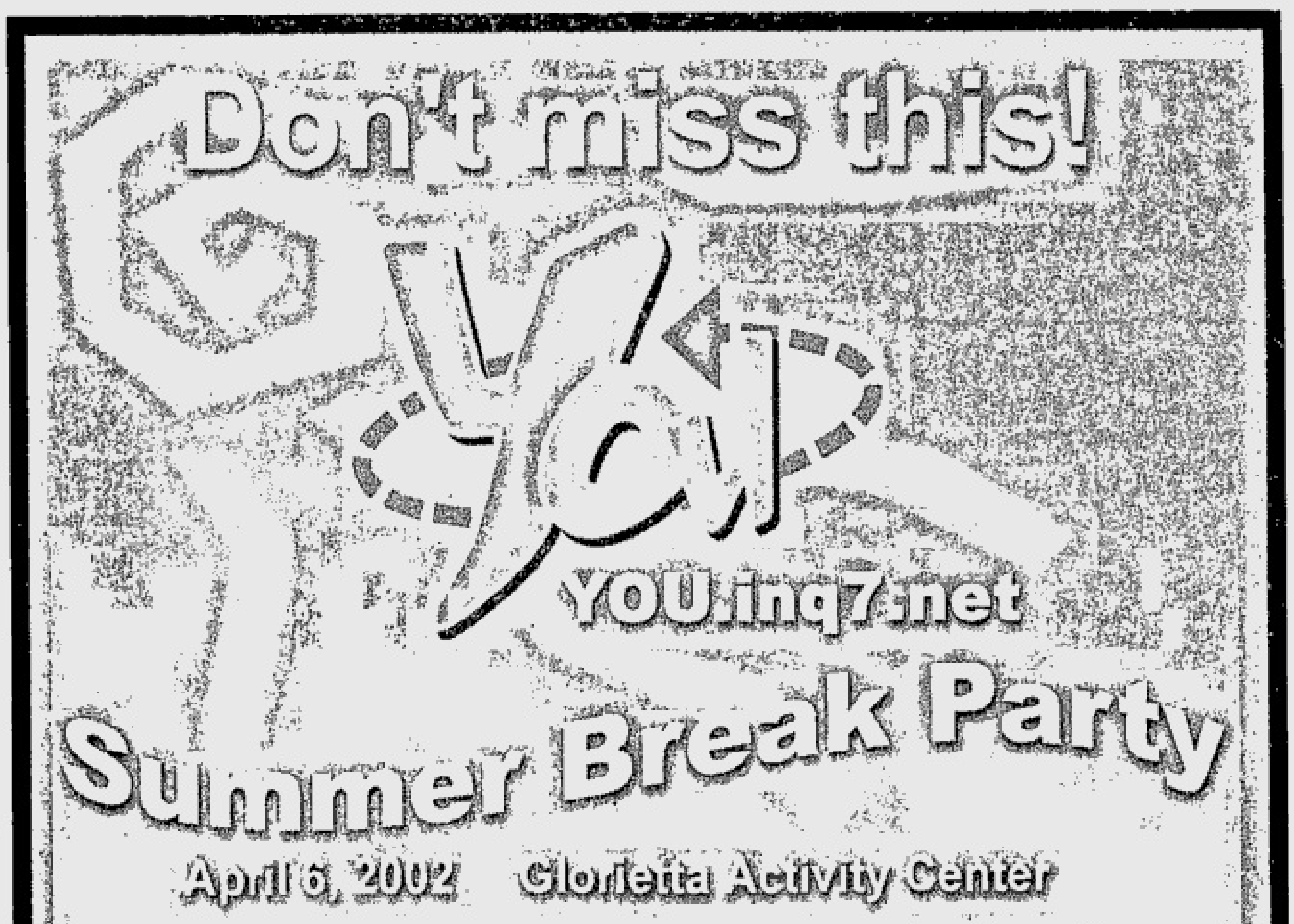
The bomb scare continued to plague the metropolis as an unidentified caller threatened to bomb a bus terminal in Pasay City yesterday morning.

The male caller warned that he had planted several bombs at the Jam Transit terminal along Taft Avenue about 8:45 a.m. yesterday, police said.

Security guard Percival Ablan received the call and he immediately asked passengers to alight from the buses and leave the terminal.

PO3 Dennis Ang and other members of the Pasay bomb disposal team searched the area, but found no explosive devices.

But the call nearly stranded hundreds of passengers bound for the provinces.



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MOVIE GUIDE

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EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2 (SDDS)	ICE AGE
3 (DTS)	JIMMY NEUTRON
4 GOLD (DTS)	THEMAJESTIC
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	JOHN Q
6 GOLD (SDDS)	BEAUTIFUL MIND
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	BANDITS
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE
9	WE WERE SOLDIERS
10	ROYAL TENENBAUMS

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	
2	EVA
3 (DTS)	BANDITS
4	ICE AGE
5	
6 (DTS)	
Golden Pearl THX	

Masagana CINEMA 0.0.4.0
(Pasay) tel 833.3274

1	BIBINGKA
2	BANDITS
3	ICE AGE

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	MAJESTIC
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	ICE AGE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BANDITS
5	EVA

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2	ICE AGE
3	BANDITS
4	SNAKE CHARMER
5	MAJESTIC
6	JOHN Q
7	
8	

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 751-2010 TO 13

1	ICE AGE

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	RIDING IN CARS . .

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
3	GAWIN SA DILIM

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	BANDITS
A	GAWIN SA DILIM

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	MAJESTIC
2	EVA
3	GAWIN SA DILIM
4	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	BANDITS
2	
3	
4	JIMMY NEUTRON
5	SNAKE CHARMER
6	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
7 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
8 (SDDS)	JOHN Q
9 (DOLBY)	ICE AGE

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	BIBINGKA

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	SNAKE CHARMER
4 (SDDS)	BANDITS
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6 (DOLBY)	MAJESTIC
7 (DTS)	ICE AGE
8	BIBINGKA
9	RESERVE

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE
4	SNAKE CHARMER
5 (SDDS)	JOHN Q
6	BIBINGKA
7 (DOLBY)	BANDITS
8	ICE AGE

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	RESERVE
2	ICE AGE
3 (DTS)	BANDITS
4	SNAKE CHARMER
5 (SDDS)	JOHN Q

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	BANDITS

Sampaguita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson Lords Jennet	SNAKE CHARMER

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	MAJESTIC
2	BANDITS
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	BANDITS
2	MAJESTIC
3	SNAKE CHARMER
4	ICE AGE
5	RESERVE

New Divisoria Mall DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	RESERVE

FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1	OPENS MARCH 30
2	OPENS MARCH 30

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	BANDITS
2	ACCIDENTAL SPY

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	BIBINGKA
3 (DTS)	ICE AGE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2 (DTS)	ICE AGE
3 (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	JIMMY NEUTRON

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2 (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3 (DTS)	ICE AGE
4	LORD OF THE RINGS

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	13 GHOSTS
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2	RAT RACE
3 (DOLBY)	13 GHOSTS
4 (DTS)	BEAUTIFUL MIND

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	RESERVE
2	BIBINGKA
3	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
4 (DTS)	BANDITS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	EVA
3 (DTS)	JIMMY NEUTRON
4	BIBINGKA
5	ICE AGE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	ICE AGE
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	BIBINGKA

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	ICE AGE
2	JIMMY NEUTRON
3	BIBINGKA

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	LORD OF THE RINGS
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	ESKANDALOSA

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
2	THE BODY
3	RESERVE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	RESERVE
2 (DTS)	EVA

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	EVA
2	LORD OF THE RINGS
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2	BIBINGKA
3	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
4	ICE AGE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
3 (DTS)	D-TOX
4	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

***Movies are subject to change without prior notice**

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

CMG INTERNATIONAL
Male Long Compound, Amorsolo cor. Dela Rosa St., Makati City
E-Mail: [illegible]
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PREMIERE CINEMA THX NOW SHOWING

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NOW SHOWING

Galleria
632- 9115- 16
633- 7641 loc. 279

1 THX	GOOD ADVICE
2	THE MAJESTIC
3	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
4	JIMMY NEUTRON
5	JOHN Q
6	ICE AGE
7	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
8	BANDITS
9	WE WERE SOLDIERS
10	THE MAJESTIC

Ermita
536 -7809- 12

1	ICE AGE
2	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
3	JIMMY NEUTRON
4	GOOD ADVICE
5	WE WERE SOLDIERS
6	JOHN Q
7	BANDITS

Metro East -
Marcos Hway 682- 8193 / 8280

1	JOHN Q
2	BANDITS
3	THE MAJESTIC
4	JIMMY NEUTRON
5	ICE AGE
6	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
7	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE

Novaliches
935- 3229 - 30

1	BANDITS
2	ICE AGE
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE
4	JOHN Q
5	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
6	JIMMY NEUTRON
7	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
8	WE WERE SOLDIERS

Imus
471- 8188 / 875- 3838

1	THE MAJESTIC
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	BANDITS
4	ICE AGE
5	JIMMY NEUTRON
6	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

Bacolod
441- 0453 / 0459

1	13 GHOSTS
2	SHALLOW HAL
3	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
4	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
5	ESKANDALOSA
6	GOT 2 BELIEVE

Iloilo
336- 8077 - 78

1	D-TOX
2	JIMMY NEUTRON
3	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
4	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
5	13 GHOSTS
6	A BEATIFUL MIND

Star Mills-
Sn Fernando, Pamp 875- 1927
961-5318 / 5270

1	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
2	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
3	EVA
4	D-TOX
5	JIMMY NEUTRON
6	JIMMY NEUTRON

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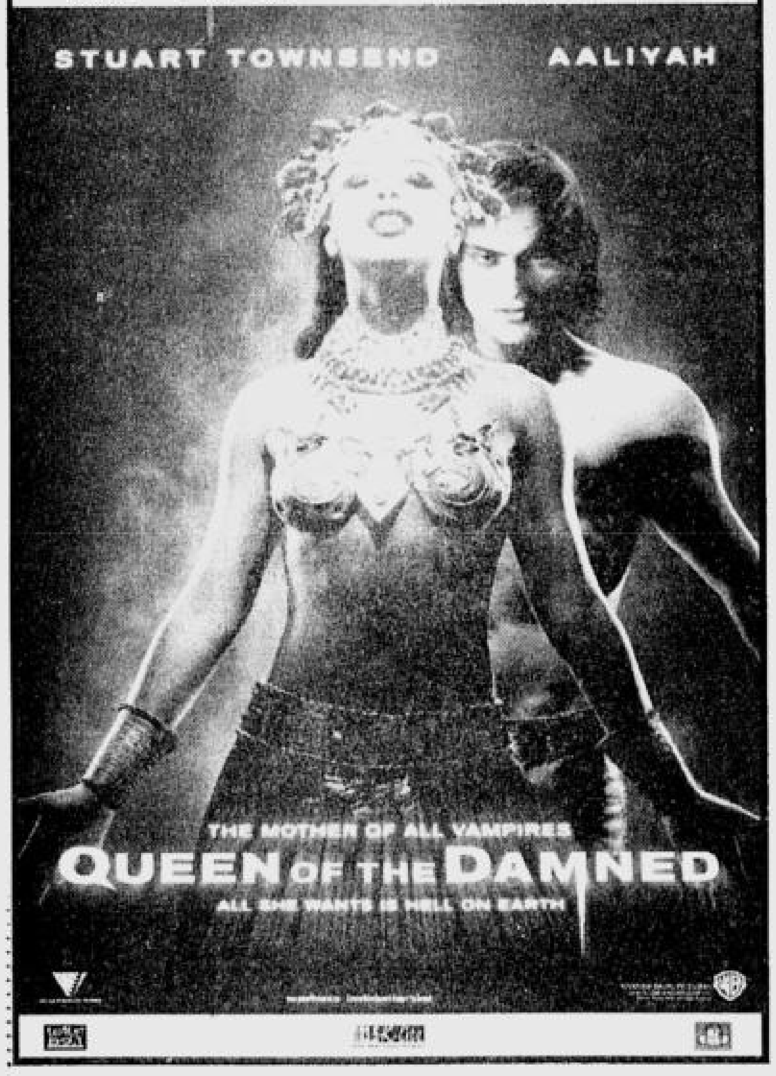
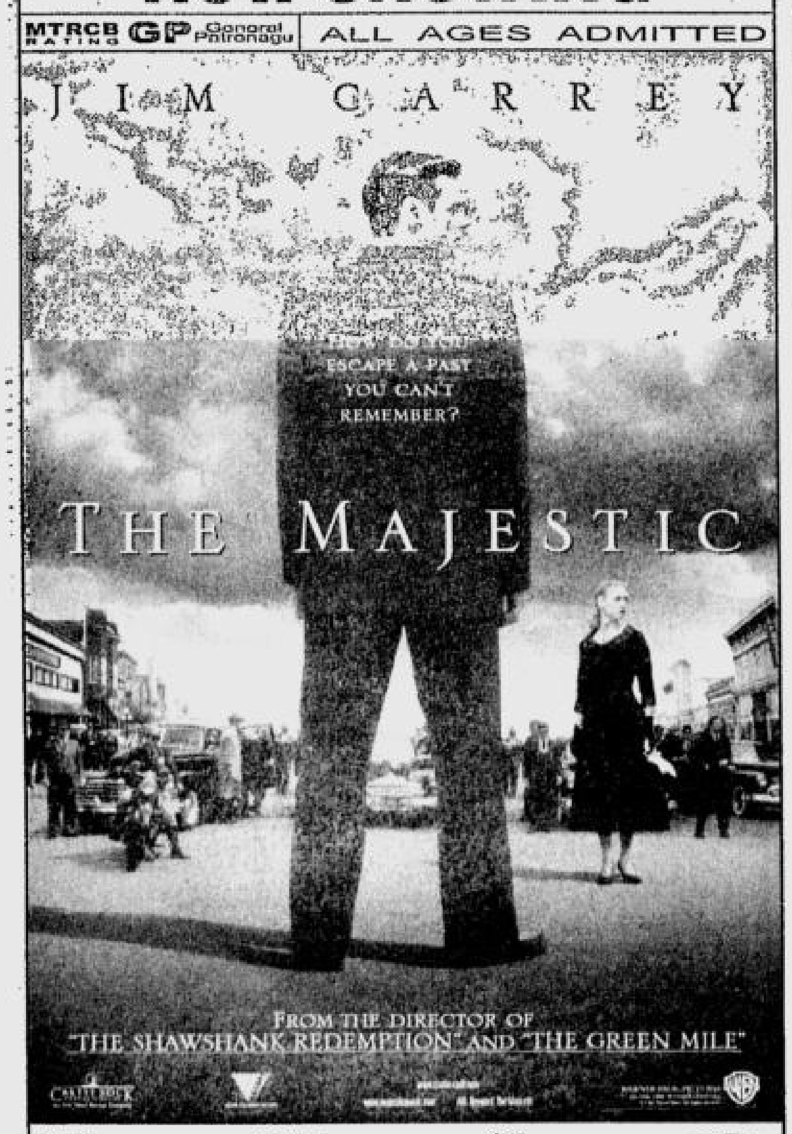

STUART TOWNSEND
AALIYAH
THE MOTHER OF ALL VAMPIRES
QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
ALL SHE WANTS IS HELL ON EARTH

NOW SHOWING

MTRCB RATING GP General Patronage | ALL AGES ADMITTED


JIM CARREY
HOW DO YOU ESCAPE A PAST YOU CAN'T REMEMBER?
THE MAJESTIC
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF "THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION" AND "THE GREEN MILE"

Sloppy . . .

From page A26

limited in terms of perspective and particularity, and isn't of much help to viewers who are genuinely interested in understanding the complex subject matter that the documentary pretends to want to investigate.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101

ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	GOT 2 BELIEVE IN MAGIC
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMMED
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	BANDITS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	JIMMY NEUTRON
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	JOHN Q
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	SNAKE CHARMER
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	AMADILO
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HUBOG / TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	JOHN Q
ODEON-2	BANDITS
ROBEN	SNAKE CHARMER
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	OTHER SIDE OF LOVE / AMERICAN PIE 2

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	BIBINGKA
REMAR	SNAKE CHARMER
REMAR-2	BIBINGKA

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	BIBINGKA
B	EVA LASON KAY ADAN
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	THE MAJESTIC
CINEMA-2	BANDITS

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
CINEMA-2	ACHILLES
CINEMA-3	BIBINGKA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	D-TOX
CINEMA-6	MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
CINEMA-7	EVA
CINEMA-8	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MAJESTIC
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BANDITS
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	JOHN Q
CINEMA-12	JIMMY NEUTRON
CINEMA-14	QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
CINEMA-15	GOT 2 BELIEVE

LORES

CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED

POWER PLANT CINEMA

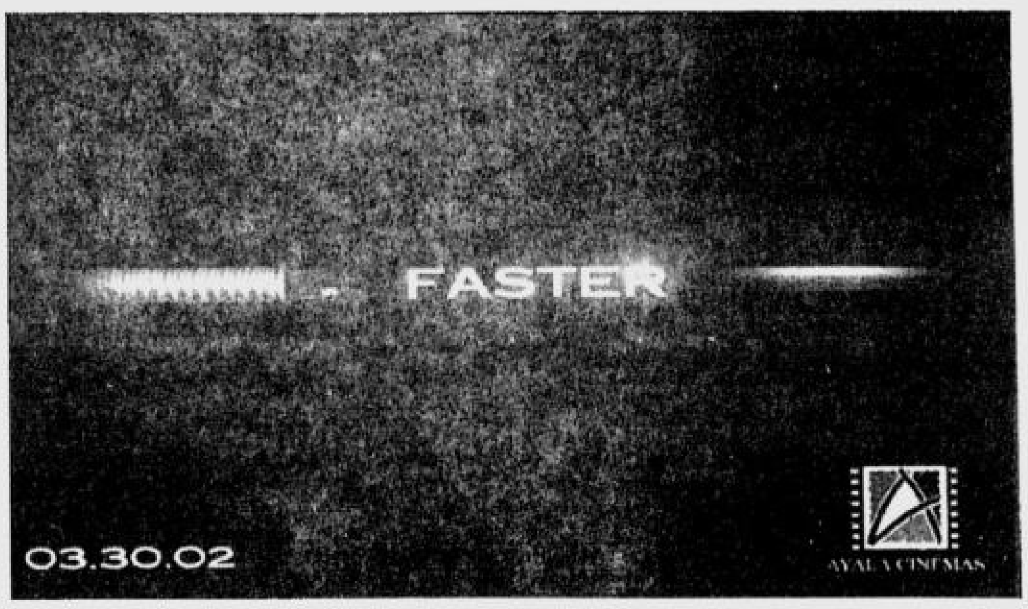
CINEMA-1	GOOD ADVICE
CINEMA-2	JIMMY NEUTRON
CINEMA-3	BANDITS
CINEMA-4	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-5	THE MAJESTIC
CINEMA-6	JOHN Q

UNIWIDE METROMALL

(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID


FASTER
03.30.02
AYALA CINEMAS

OPENS MARCH 30
@
The All-Digital Sound
GLORIETTA 4
CINEMAS

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R)

AYALA CINEMAS
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CHICAGO TRIBUNE

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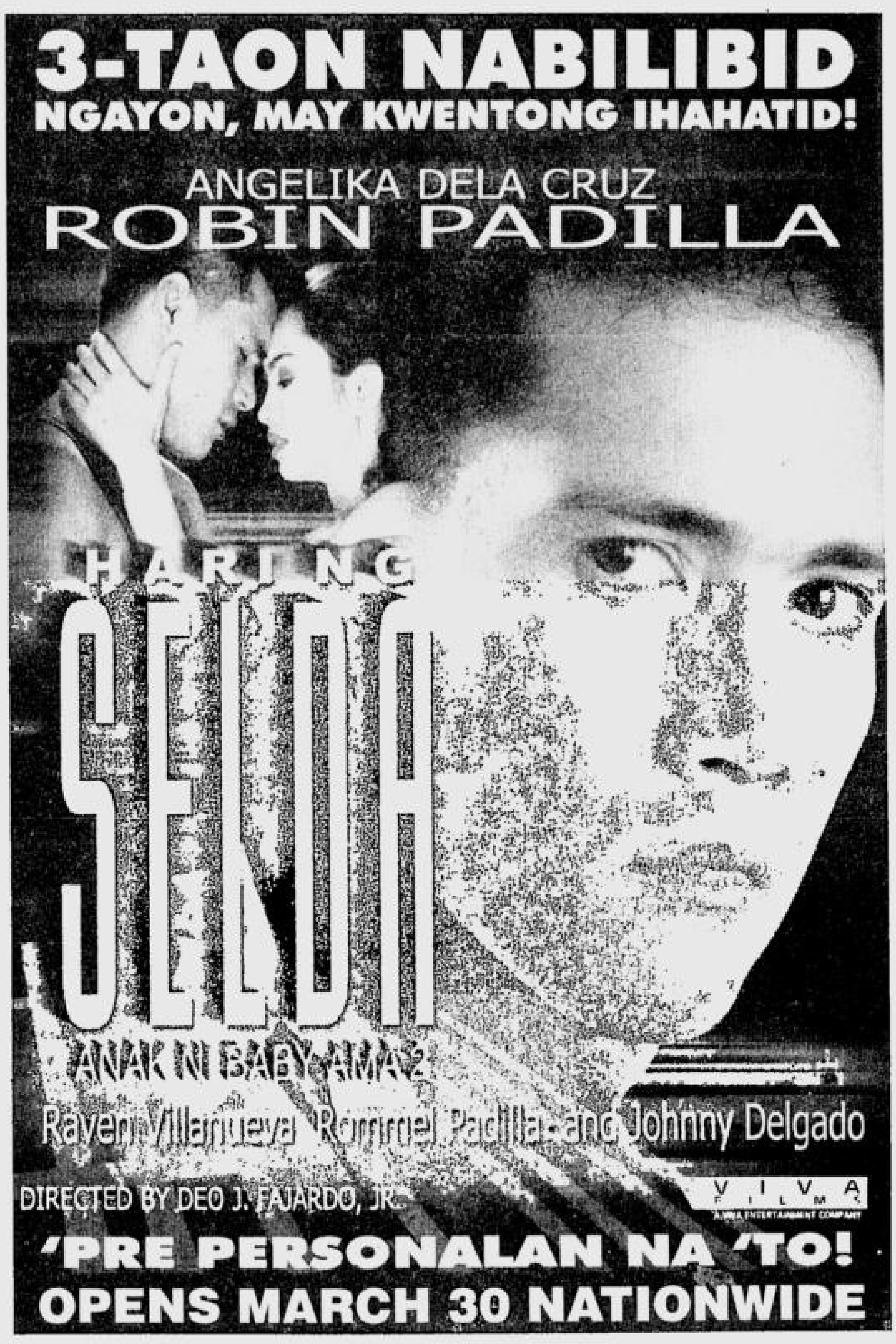
CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL / FANTASPORTO
INDEPENDENT SPIRIT
NATIONAL BOARD OF REVIEW(USA)


3-TAON NABILIBID
NGAYON, MAY KWENTONG IHAHATID!
ANGELIKA DELA CRUZ
ROBIN PADILLA
HARI NG SELDA
ANAK NI BABY AMA 2
Raven Villanueva Rommel Padilla and Johnny Delgado
DIRECTED BY DEO J. FAJARDO, JR.
VIVA FILMS
'PRE PERSONALAN NA 'TO!
OPENS MARCH 30 NATIONWIDE

$48,000,000 THE HIGHEST WEEKEND OPENING IN THE US THIS YEAR

MTRCB RATING ➤ G GENERAL PATRONAGE | ALL AGES ADMITTED

LICENSED TO CHILL ON MARCH 30
ICE AGE
Blue Sky
www.iceagemovie.com

Special thanks to: DUNKIN' DONUTS Pasalubong ng Bayan
SMART Simply Amazing!
Information Gateway
92.3

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Trusting that God knows best

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

WHEN was the last time you vividly recall being happy?

If you had asked me this a couple of weeks ago, I would have said it was on my birthday at the Mandala in Boracay. After having a massage and going back to the women's locker room, I read a text message from the "Game KNB" production manager saying our episode the previous night, where **Ai-Ai de las Alas** had played, earned the highest rating for the entire night, beating even "Pangako Sa 'Yo."

This was a long cherished dream for all of us in the show, to be No. 1 over all other programs, even for just a day. We scored mega-high ratings, the highest ever on the 8:30 p.m. slot, when **Sharon Cuneta** won her P1 million for the Home for the Aged and the abandoned children of the Reception and Study Center for Children, but "Pangako" still out-rated us by 0.4 of a ratings percentage point.

It finally happened. Four months after our bumpy launch, my fervent wish was granted.

It was only in the last few days that I realized how limited my scope of happiness was. Unconsciously, or maybe I did knowingly allow it to seep in until it became my lifeblood, I let work rule my life. Why? Because the devotion I gave it has given me back ample, even bountiful, fruits.

I'm referring to not just the material benefits. I speak of sitting in a darkly tinted car at 11 p.m. and, when we stopped at a red light, boys selling roses and peering in would shout "Game KNB" with glee. It's having a mom tell you that the first clear phrase of her 16-month-old toddler is "Game na," complete with hand gesture. It's having a 78-year-old *balikbayan* grandma come all the way to your studio from Hawaii just so she could kiss you and have a souvenir photo taken with you.

It's the awareness that you're now an inescapable part of Pinoy culture.

It took a new friend to point out to me that all this is temporary. At some point, the show will bid adieu. Things change, and in entertainment, they do seem to change fastest. As good as this may be now, it won't last forever.

I prayed at the Adoration Chapel last night, and for the first time I didn't specify what I wanted to happen. I just prayed for what would be best.

My writer **Cecille** saw that I was down during taping. She asked what was wrong. I am transparent, and I didn't evade her question. I said I was afraid of what loving entails. I was afraid of risking the hurt that might come from going for it. It took me so long to reach a point where I was content, because I'd created a world that was secure. I was comfortable with my routine. Why let someone new come in?

What's best

I related it to our show. If you win in the elimination and in the face-off rounds, there's the thrill of beating the competition. But if you're playing the solo rounds, you're just playing against yourself. With each round you play, the risk becomes greater because you've worked hard to get to where you are, you feel there's already much to lose.

And yet if you make it to the P1-million round, is it greed to go for it? Will you eventually regret never having tried to answer it? After all, you went into it with nothing to begin with. Or will you forever regret not having stayed put at P500,000, complete with a showcase for a loved one, and simply walking away from the possible humiliation?

Cecille sat down with me during a lull and told me a simple truth that I've long known but have stubbornly kept in the back of my mind. She said, "Kris, regardless of how stubborn you can be, no matter how much you insist on having your way, or even if you surrender and just give up, at the end of it all, whether you like it or not, what will ultimately. come to pass, what will be given to you by God, is what's best for you. It's that simple. It's also that complicated. If now it feels wrong, then maybe now is not the time. But if it's what's best for you, it will eventually happen, you just have to allow it."

I trust that God knows best. He does, I know. Yet I can be so stubborn to demand my way.

A prayer

This Holy Week, allow me to close this column with a simple prayer. It comes from the book "Teatime Stories for Women," a compilation of inspiring stories by **Linda Evans Shepherd**. Written by **Susan Duke**, "When Gifts have Wings" speaks of a special time in her life when she was marking the birth anniversary of her now deceased son **Thomas**.

Instead of leaving flowers at his grave, she brought balloons. In the morning, she had received an advanced copy of a magazine that carried an essay she'd written for Thomas. At the balloon shop, the clerk asked if she wanted 12 more balloons to add to her dozen because there'd been a mix-up in the order. The clerk also said she had one giant Happy Birthday balloon that Susan could also have.

All in all, Susan had 25 balloons to release heavenwards to Thomas, who in fact would have celebrated his 25th birthday had he not passed away at 18.

This is the prayer: "Dear Lord, help me to remember there is no distance between my heart and you. You are aware of all my hopes and dreams. Lord, like a kaleidoscope of balloons, I release each one to Your care. For only through You will my hopes and dreams soar to heavenly heights. Amen."

Sloppy work

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FOR a number of TV seasons now, we have been seeing the revival of the TV documentary, and many viewers have welcomed this development with delight. There's nothing like the TV documentary format to go beyond the simplistic news bite or one-minute news report, to get to the heart of an event, newsmaker or social reality.

TV documentaries encourage viewers to think big and deep, instead of myopic and shallow, and this is all to the good. TV should do better than its viewers' expectations or preferences, to live up to its responsibilities as an information medium.

However, some producers of TV documentaries now seem to be taking their success for granted. Instead of doing in-depth work, they make-do with weak research, shallow coverage and quickie production work, and the shortcuts are showing on the tube.

This is really quite embarrassing, since some of the host-producers are big names whose work has been honored both here and abroad. Consistently superior work is thus expected from them—and, when they fall short, viewers' disappointment is pronounced.

Clearly, no TV documentarist, no matter how committed or gifted, can come up with a good hour-long documentary a week. There's just too much work in terms of conceptualizing, research, pre-interviews, immersion, shooting, analysis and post-production to squeeze into seven or even 14 days.

The better format would thus be the weekly documentary show with four producers working on one documentary each per month.

Even in shows with this more workable "round-robin" format, however, it's becoming increasingly clear that some producers are resorting to quickie productions which they try to pass off as in-depth reports.

The strange thing is that these producers could even think that such sloppy work would escape the attention—and disdain—of TV documentary buffs. After all, these are people who have seen the best that both foreign and local documentary producers have had to offer these past few years.

So, documentary producers will just have to do better work, or else their hard-won reputations will be compromised in no time at all.

What's wrong with their work now? Aside from their quickie shooting schedules, their choice of topics is similarly suspect—trendy, superficially entertaining, controversial or "shocking" topics chosen to titillate the greatest number of viewers.

As a result, their work is sometimes slanted,

SLOPPY/ A25

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

BANDITS - P 13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

JIMMY NEUTRON - GP
11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30

A BEAUTIFUL MIND - P 13
1:10, 3:55, 6:40, 9:30

ICE AGE- GP
11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40
MAJESTIC - GP
6:30, 9:30

GOOD ADVICE - P 13
12:10, 2:10, 4:10, 6:10, 8:10, 10:10

JOHN Q - P 13
11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

THEATRE MALL

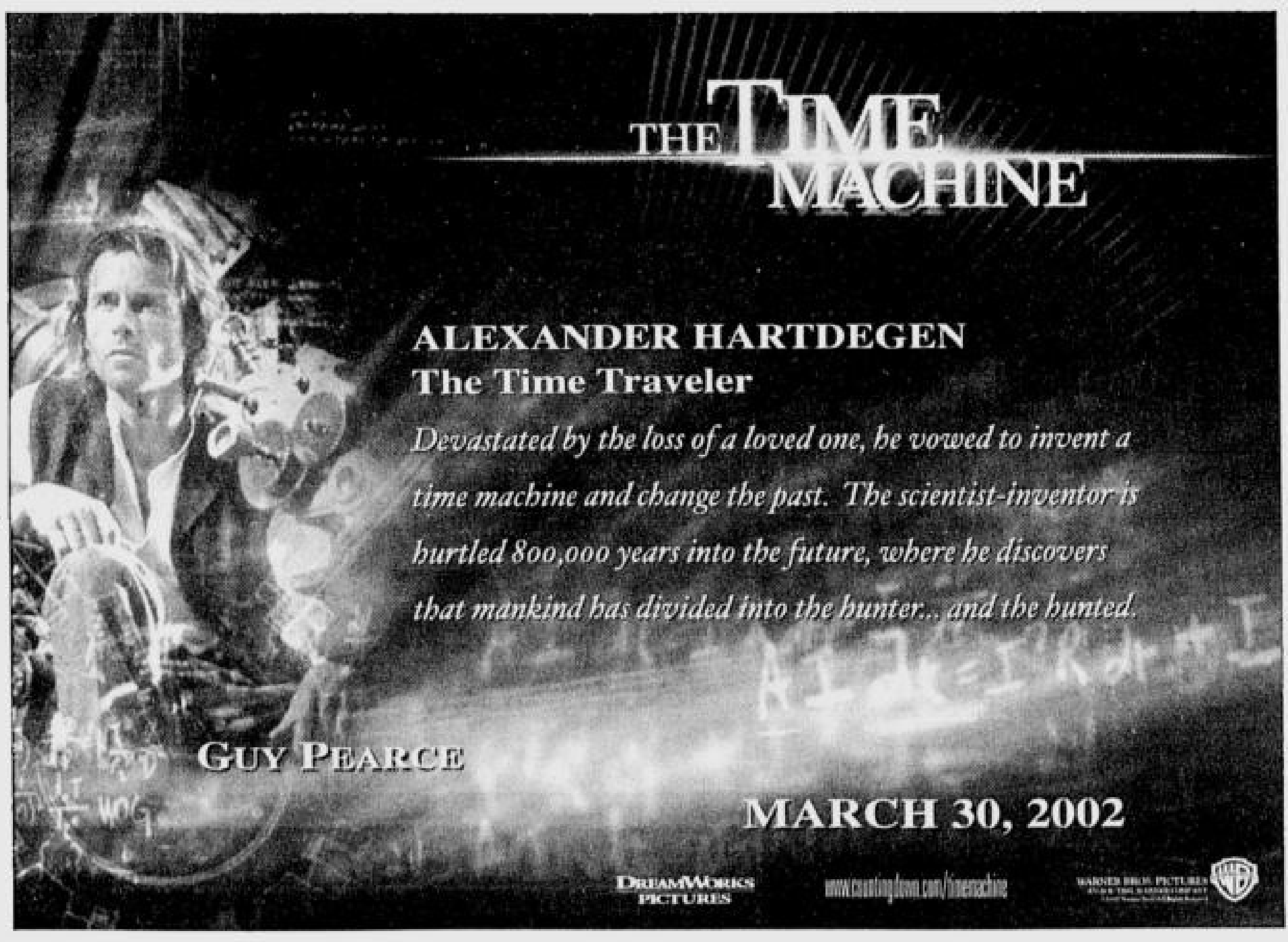
1 BANDITS
11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50
P 13

2 THE MAJESTIC
12:40, 3:55, 6:55, 10:00
GP

MUSIC MUSEUM APRIL 12 & 13 KUH LEDESMA (On Higher Ground) 9:00 PM / APRIL 19 & 20 K NA K KA NA BA? (ALLAN K.) 9:00 PM

NOW SHOWING
MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs.old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

AFTER KAMASUTRA COMES...
PLAYBOY
MARSHA YUEH
PLAYBOY'S CENTERFOLDS
SNAKE CHARMER



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OPENS MARCH 30 (Sat.)

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Vincent Gallo
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Gov't to lift tax exemption of AUVs

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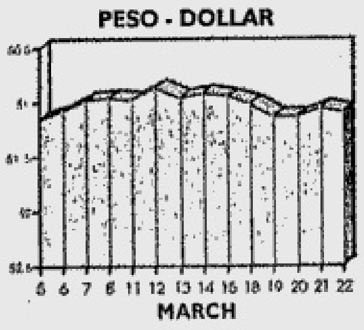

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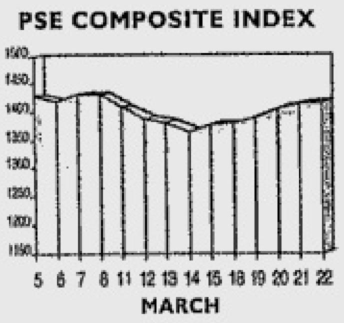
₱51.095 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 22, 2002

¥132.32 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 22, 2002

GOLD: $292.30/292.80
per ounce Hong Kong, March 21, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Bargain-hunters seen lifting stocks



(See stock market report on Page B6)

BARGAIN-HUNTERS are still expected to prowl the market during this shortened trading week in anticipation of the market rebound that seasonally occurs after the long Lenten holidays.

This developed as the Philippine Stock Exchange announced that it would remain open for business until Wednesday and pause for a long weekend in observance of the Holy Week. Half-day trading will be observed on Wednesday.

Seasonally trading in light volumes during the trading weeks before the Lenten holidays, the main-share Philippine Stock Exchange composite index gained 2.76 percent last week to close at 1,417.75 on Friday, buoyed by the drop in interest rates and other corporate developments.

"The week before the long Lenten break is always bullish," Eagle Equities president Joseph Roxas said.

The market was able to recover last week as investors started picking up selective issues when the main index hit the 1,400 levels.

Analysts said the sharp slowdown in interest rates were stimulating investor interest in interest-rate sensitive stocks such as property and banking issues.

BPI Securities said it expected accumulation on select issues to continue this week even as trading is likely to be sideways due to the long holidays. It also agreed that the outlook remained bullish because the market continued to show strength as indicated by its recovery last week. *Doris Dumlao*

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENTS of Finance and of Trade and Industry have agreed to lift the exemption of Asian utility vehicles (AUVs) from paying excise tax and to slap these with a 2- to 3-percent rate.

However, bigger and more expensive luxury vehicles would only be subject to a 5-percent tax, a rate way below the 80- to 100-percent levy based on existing regulations.

With the much lower tax rate to be imposed on the so-called sports utility vehicles, the government is now expecting to collect only P2.5 billion to P3 billion in additional taxes yearly. It had earlier set a target of P5 billion in incremental revenue once the legislation amending the automotive excise taxation was passed.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the DOF, the DTI and the automotive industry were still finalizing a government proposal to impose excise taxes on AUVs and on all vehicles with a seating capacity of 10 or more that used to be exempt from the tax.

"I think the AUV makers agree to the plan of the government because the tax would be very minimal," the finance chief said.

Last year, the government was still considering to exempt the bare AUVs being used for public transport from excise tax but that plan had been dropped.

DOF sources said the earlier plan to restructure the automotive excise tax would earn an additional P5 billion for the government on top of the P5 billion it collects every year.

But the original version of the restructuring had been watered down to accommodate the strong lobby particularly from American car companies, a ranking finance official said.

The lifting of the exemption on 10 seaters including AUVs is meant to plug a revenue leak since even the expensive luxury vehicles try to pass themselves off as 10-seater units when the administrative regulation meant to benefit only the AUVs or vehicles supposedly with a 60-percent local content.

CAMACHO

The DOF had planned to address the loophole through an administrative order from the Bureau of Internal Revenue but had agreed to consolidate the issue with the legislative measure to be submitted to Congress within the first half of the year.

The lifting of the exemption on 10-seaters would be on top of the plan of the government to change the basis of the automotive excise taxes to selling price from engine displacement and fuel type that was provided in the law.

Camacho said the government had yet to decide whether the basis would be the wholesale or the retail price.

Based on the proposal of the DOF, vehicles worth P600,000 would be subject to a 2-percent excise tax while those worth P2 million or above would be slapped an excise tax of 5 percent.

At present, excise taxes on motor vehicles depend on the fuel type and the level of engine displacement, meaning a stronger-powered car is slapped with a higher tax.

For instance, a car with a 1.5-liter engine or lower is subjected to a 15-percent tax while heavier vehicles with a 3-liter engine or higher have to pay an excise tax of 100 percent.

American manufacturers like Ford Motors Corp. and General Motors Corp. produce vehicles with big engine displacements, thus they favored the shift in the basis to sale price.

But other companies like Toyota Motors Corp. with a relatively modest-sized engine displacement would prefer to maintain the current system.

Safeguards, temporary duty eyed to help cement firms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TRADE and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas is seriously considering to either impose permanent safeguard measures or extend the provisional duty on cement following the Tariff Commission's rejection of the Philippine Cement Manufacturers Corp.'s petition for punitive tariffs and quota restrictions.

Roxas said the DTI would take the "broader public interest" in mind in acting on the decision of the Tariff Commission, which the former lawmaker said based its recommendation on a "narrow" perspective.

Roxas stressed that he has not received a copy of the Tariff Commission's report and that the DTI has yet to finalize its position.

But former Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, principal author of RA 8800 entitled Safeguard Measures Act, cautioned Roxas against disobeying the Tariff Commission's recommendation.

In a statement, Enrile said the law did not allow the trade or agriculture secretary to reverse a negative finding of the Tariff Commission in order to provide a system of check and balance by making the Commission's findings final.

Enrile said that the trade or agriculture secretary could only modify the safeguard measures endorsed by the Tariff Commission by either increasing or decreasing the final definitive measures to take into account the public interest.

He said that the Safeguard Measures law, which was enacted in 2000, precluded industries that have exhibited monopolistic, manipulative devices or anti-competitive conduct to prevent the

SAFEGUARDS/ B6

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ADB opposes transfer of $1B in Napocor loans to Psalm

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank is opposing the government's proposal to transfer lock, stock and barrel the bank's $1 billion worth of loan exposure in National Power Corp. (Napocor) to the new company in charge of the power firm's privatization.

In a briefing to reporters, ADB chief country officer to the Philippines Richard Ondrik said the government recently submitted a letter requesting the block transfer of all the rights and obligations to 18 project loans from the bank to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm).

Ondrik said the letter had listed all of Napocor's outstanding debts with the ADB, one of the power firm's biggest creditors, and said the government did not intend to change any of the loan covenants but simply wanted to transfer everything to Psalm.

Created under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act, Psalm was mandated to assume all of Napocor's financial obligations as of end-2000 and take over all of its disposable assets. The utility firm's total assets as of that period amounted to P989.7 billion while its total long-term debts stood at P292 billion.

"We don't have problems with the transfer of assets. Legally, we are supposed to undertake the transfer of assets and liabilities. What we cannot do is do a block transfer of all of our loans," Ondrik said.

"We are not saying no by any means. We just can't do it in a one-shot deal," he stressed.

While the government intended to speed up the privatization process with the proposed block transfer, Ondrik said the ADB would still have to review each loan transfer separately. He admitted that the loan transfers could "take a while" but added that the bank would take the necessary measures not to cause any delay in the privatization of Napocor's assets.

"If, for example, they selected an asset that they wanted to put on the auction block tomorrow, we would immediately look at the loans extended for that asset and take the necessary measures to make sure that we would not delay the sale of that asset," Ondrik said.

He also explained that the ADB was not keen on transferring all of its loan exposure to Psalm because of the latter's limited mandate. He said it was possible that some of the covenants and conditions tied to the ADB loans could not be fulfilled by the asset and liabilities management firm.

"If it concerns transmission assets, it may be the transco (transmission company) that can fulfill those conditions. It may be that the DOE (Department of Energy) has to take charge of some obligations or conditions tied to the loans to Napocor," he said.

In the meantime, Ondrik said the ADB would continue making available its private sector lending window to private groups seeking financing for the purchase of the Napocor assets slated for bidding.

Spanish hotel operator expands RP operations

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SPANISH hotel and resorts chain operator Barcelo is going ahead with its strategy of forming marketing and management tie-ups of choice tourism facilities in the country despite the economic and security problems besetting the country.

Barcelo has inked an agreement with owners of the Asturias Hotel to market and manage the 60-room hotel in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

The hotel has been renamed Barcelo Asturias Hotel and will now be promoted along with Barcelo's 118 mid-market and high-end hotels and resorts in 19 countries.

This will be Barcelo's third Filipino partner-hotel after the Barcelo Pearl Farm Island Resort in Davao and the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel and Convention Center in Iloilo City.

Barcelo's confidence in the country's tourism industry remained intact despite the foray of Abu Sayyaf at Pearl Farm last year. The company remains on the lookout for possible tie-ups with hotels and resorts in the country.

Barcelo's expansion in the Philippines is part of the firm's goal of building up its presence in the Asia-Pacific to complement its vast presence in Europe and the US. Barcelo has likewise set its sights on setting up shop in Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia.

Barcelo is one of Europe's biggest hotel and resort chain operators and is fully integrated to provide a broad package of travel services—retail travel agency (Viajes Barcelo and First Choice), tour operation (Turavia) and transport.

Open letter to Chief Justice Davide

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THERE is something terribly wrong going on at the administrative side of your court. You know nothing about it, I am sure. Just the same, it gnaws at the very credibility of the highest tribunal of the land.

Last Feb. 19, the Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP) filed before your court petition G.R. 152013-15. It aimed to: first, annul Section 11(b) of Act 7941 (the party-list law) as unconstitutional, and second, prevent Comelec from further proclaiming other party-list participants as winners in the 14 May 2001 elections.

On Feb. 26, your court sitting en banc cursorily dismissed the petition. Reasons: (1) PARP's contentions had already been disposed of in the case Veteran's Federation Party vs. Comelec, and (2) no certified true copies—that is, no copies at all, certified or not—or duplicate originals of the Comelec resolutions, which were the subject of the petition, were attached to the petition.

The first reason is legal and I should not discuss it here, more so because I am not a lawyer.

But the second is downright scandalous. With a shoestring budget, PARP has no permanently paid staff. We on the national executive board are all volunteers working for free. We do everything ourselves. I am acting president while our president Amado F. Cabaero is on vacation.

With the help of my driver, I put together 19 legal-sized folders with plastic fasteners. Each folder contained (a) the petition in 13 sheets of legal-sized paper, (b) the two affidavits of service and non-forum shopping, one sheet each, and (c) the certified true copies of three Comelec resolutions—which I personally procured at the Comelec—in 17 sheets. Each folder had 32 sheets of documents, or 608 sheets in all in the 19 folders as required by your court's rules.

Under my personal supervision, my driver delivered the 19 folders to your court's receiving section. But, because of the section's way of doing things, I have nothing to show for the transaction except the top sheet of my file copy stamped "received" and initialed by the clerk. By the way, this file copy is complete with the petition and all attachments.

It was impossible to miss attaching copies of the three resolutions on all 19 folders. Each set consisted of 17 sheets, or a total of 323 in all the folders. The missing documents accounted for more than half of the submissions.

Clearly, the documents were pilfered in your court's premises. It was not a grab-and-run job. The thief or thieves had to undo the fasteners because the resolutions were at the bottom of each folder. Then, the folders had to be put together again. The thief or thieves had the luxury of time and space to spirit away a total of 323 (out of 608) legal-sized sheets of documents from 19 folders. It was not petty thievery; it was grand larceny. And definitely an inside job.

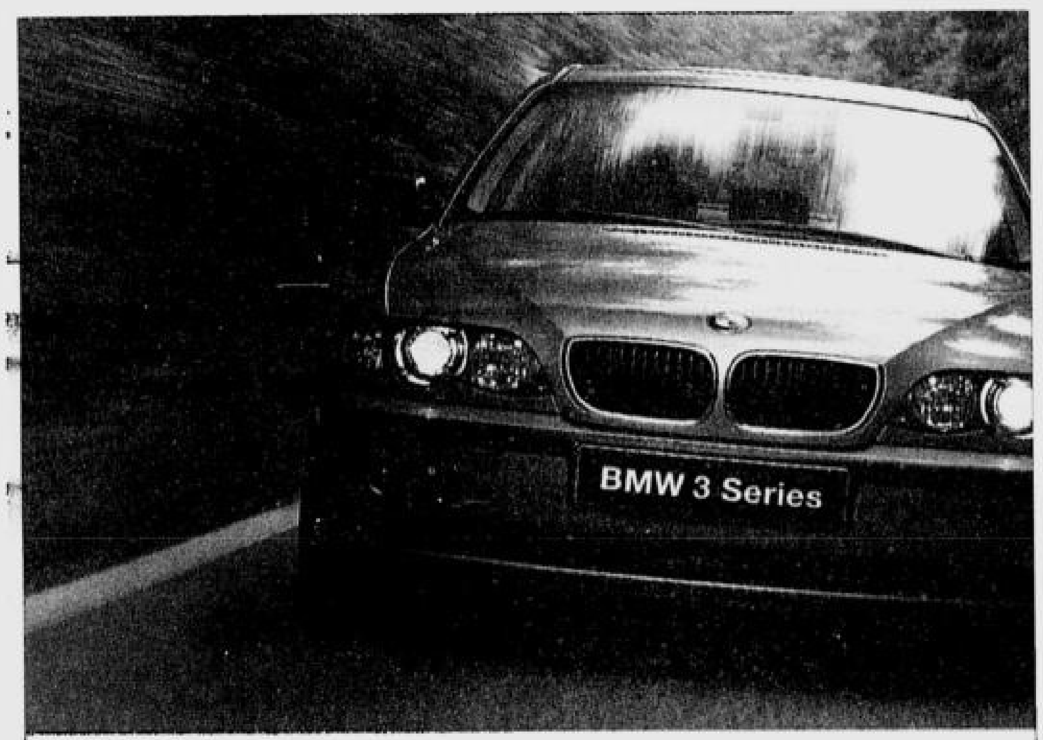
With such a lax security system, how can you expect the Filipino people to continue submitting documents to the custody of your court under current rules?

You may ask, who could have been the mastermind? The list of respondents may give you a clue. Outside sinister forces are at work to strike our petition down. This, in itself, should convince your court that our case should be looked into much more carefully.

PARP is a nationwide association of SSS and GSIS retirees. We are not a wild-eyed, fist-clenching, flag-burning bunch of pinkos and commies. We are decent and law-abiding citizens who have served our country long and well. If we want to continue serving, it is because we want to carry a share of the load.

Last Thursday, I personally filed at the receiving section our motion for reconsideration. On my insistence, the clerk reluctantly marked "received" and initialed with her own warm hand every last one of the 32 pages of my file copy.

I do not even dare think of toying with the idea of influencing your court. But, may I most respectfully request: give us a fair shake. Listen to us. And, please—listen well.



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PCD gets securities depository license

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has granted the Philippine Central Depository Inc., a subsidiary of the Philippine Stock Exchange, a provisional license to operate as a depository not only for equities but also for debt securities.

SEC documents indicated that a review of the PCD's scripless operations convinced the corporate watchdog that the agency could "effectively provide and perform the needed depository services, including the generation of the list of beneficial owners and the delivery of fund transfer instructions to the settlement bank."

The SEC approved the granting of the license to PCD in its meeting last March 21.

The PCD had sought from the SEC an authority to serve as a depository for both equities and debt securities as it was earlier designated as the central securities depository of certain fixed income instruments like the IMP Bond and the Ayala Land Inc. bond.

The IMP Bond refers to the six-year zero-coupon bond issued by the Philippine government on Friday to finance the Internal Revenue Allotment Monetization Program. This program was approved during the term of ousted President Estrada and was given the go-ahead signal by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The PCD is a private institution organized to implement a book-entry system, which is expected to improve the operations of securities transactions.

The book-entry system intends to reduce, if not eliminate, the paperwork involved under present practices. Participants will have to open a security account with PCD where their securities can be deposited in.

The securities eligible in the book-entry system of PCD are equity securities or stocks listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange, and debt securities such as treasury bills and treasury bonds.

The PSE last year opened a new fixed-income board for the trading of debt securities. *Doris C. Dumlao*

BayanTel, Extelcom in talks for partnership in mobile phone venture

By Abigail L. Ho

LOPEZ-OWNED Bayan Telecommunications Inc. is currently in talks with Express Telecommunication Co. Inc. for a possible partnership in a cellular phone business.

In a telephone interview last week, BayanTel chief financial officer Gary Olivar said the two telecom firms were trying to work on an agreement despite Extelcom's appeal to the Supreme Court not to grant BayanTel a license to offer cellular phone service.

"We're in discussions with them. We're in discussion on how to proceed with the plan jointly," he told the INQUIRER.

Olivar, however, said that it was premature to say whether the two telecommunications firms would strike a deal as talks had just started.

He also pointed out that both parties were still waiting for the Supreme Court's decision regarding the motion for reconsideration that Extelcom filed earlier.

The high court handed down a decision favoring BayanTel in a case Extelcom filed against it almost two years ago. Extelcom wanted the National Telecommunications Commission to void the cellular phone service license it gave BayanTel.

Extelcom had asked the court to reconsider its decision.

Olivar said last month that BayanTel was willing to tie up with Extelcom in the cellular phone business. He said this after news came out that Extelcom was also willing to sit down with BayanTel to talk about a possible alliance.

Extelcom, the country's pioneer cellular service provider, is preparing to break into the fiercely competitive global system for mobile communications (GSM) arena.

Industry sources earlier said Extelcom would start offering GSM services by June this year.

BayanTel, which owns 47 percent of Extelcom, for its part, is scheduled to debut in the wireless business as soon as it gets a favorable decision from the Supreme Court and a strategic partner.

Olivar earlier said that forging a partnership with Extelcom would benefit both parties for it would combine the two firms' technical expertise, existing infrastructure as well as frequencies.

Extelcom already has the infrastructure, the people and some cellular frequencies that will, combined with BayanTel's own frequencies, allow them to serve more customers.

In September last year, the NTC gave both BayanTel and Extelcom 5 megahertz of frequency each on the 1800 bandwidth.

Extelcom had also indicated its interest in getting the remaining 5 MHz of frequency that the NTC had left in its pool.

The telecom firm, however, has yet to file a formal application with the NTC.

A source disclosed that the amount of capital expenditure budget for Extelcom's GSM business was dependent on the frequencies it would get.

GOINGS-ON

Valdepeñas at UN summit

VICTOR B. Valdepeñas, president and chief operating officer of UnionBank of the Philippines, last week spoke before the United Nation-sponsored summit of heads of government and multilateral agencies in Monterrey, Mexico.

Valdepeñas, the only Asian speaker in the conference, presented his views on the challenges of financing global development. Other speakers during the summit were George Soros of Soros Fund Management and Professor Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard University.

Among the multilateral agencies represented in the summit were the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. Finance/economic ministers from the Group of 10, Group of 24 and other civic and economic bodies attended the conference.

Income up 285%

AYALA Life Assurance Inc. reported an increase in net income from life insurance operations by 285 percent, from a loss of P54.9 million in 2000 to a net income of P101.6 million in 2001. The losses in 2000 were attributed to the company's high operating costs plus restructuring-related costs.

Despite difficult market conditions, Ayala Life posted double-digit growth in its top-line revenues, from P1.19 billion in 2000 to P1.32 billion in 2001. The company reduced its cost ratio from a high of 31 percent in 1999 to 21 percent in 2000 and to its lowest at 17 percent in 2001.

8 more branches

ALLIED Bank opened eight new branches during the first quarter of the year bringing its total branches nationwide to 281.

It currently ranks sixth in the industry in terms of branch network.

The latest to be opened were the branches in Grace Park, Caloocan and Cainta, Rizal. The other six newly opened branches are located in Don Antonio Heights, Quezon City; San Rafael Bulacan; UE Caloocan; Consolacion, Cebu; Capas, Tarlac; and Grace Village, Quezon City.

Allied Bank president Reynaldo A. Maclang said the bank plans to open four more branches this year.

This year, such a network expansion enabled Allied Bank to maintain its position in the industry as one of the Top 10 Philippine Banks as it marks its 25th year in the business.

BSP eyes further cut in rates

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has said it will consider a cut in its 16-percent reserve requirement on banks to shore up the amount of money floating in the financial system and stimulate growth.

"If the money supply continues to be below our expectations, and if it is not corrected by the recent adjustment on our tiering, then we will look at reducing the liquidity reserve requirement," Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in an interview on Friday.

A decision will probably come out in June, he said.

"We will wait a while. The tiering probably released quite a lot of money into the system. We will see the impact first," he told reporters.

Banks currently observe a 16-percent reserve requirement. This means that for every peso that they can loan, banks must keep 16 centavos in the central bank's vaults as reserves.

Out of this 16 centavos, 7 centavos—referred to as liquidity—earn market rates, while 9 centavos—also called "statutory reserves"—earn below market rates.

The BSP adjusts this reserve requirement depending upon the economy's needs.

If it lowers the reserve requirement, the central bank releases more money into the financial system that companies can, in turn, borrow to build

BSP/ B6

ROGER CARPIO

ECONOMICS EXPERT IN MANILA

International Exchange Bank chair Ramon Sy (right) and Roberto Romulo (left), senior presidential adviser and chair of the Carlos P. Romulo Foundation, exchange pleasantries with Karl D. Jackson, director for the School of Advanced International Studies at the John Hopkins University, during a forum tackling Asia's return to sustain economic growth at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel.

PNOC unit bags ₱150-M deal

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Shipping and Transport Corp. announced last week it sealed a P150-million contract with Petron Corp. for the hauling of petroleum products to Mindanao hot spots.

PSTC president Cesar Tapia said the contract could last up to three years depending on the firm's performance on each delivery.

"The deal enlists two of our four ships," Tapia said. "We hope to complete the three years and have the contract renewed."

The state firm's vessels—with carrying capacities of 28,000 to 35,000 barrels of fuel—will move products from Petron's Bataan refinery to Zamboanga, Davao and Jolo.

Tapia noted that the award of the contract came after calls from the Philippine Petroleum Sea Transport Association (Philpesta) for the government to "wind down the operations" of, if not privatize, PSTC.

Philpesta said the continued operation of PSTC was in conflict with the administration's policy not to compete with private firms in business.

"The privatization of PSTC will be shelved because of unfavorable economic conditions," Tapia said. "We failed twice in 1994 and 1997 in our attempts to privatize."

He added that investors would want PSTC only after it modernized its aging fleet and improved its profitability.

Tapia said that on the average, PSTC's four ships were 18 years old while the industry standard is less than 10 years.

In an earlier interview, Tapia said PSTC was in talks with the Development Bank of the Philippines on funding the purchase of a new vessel.

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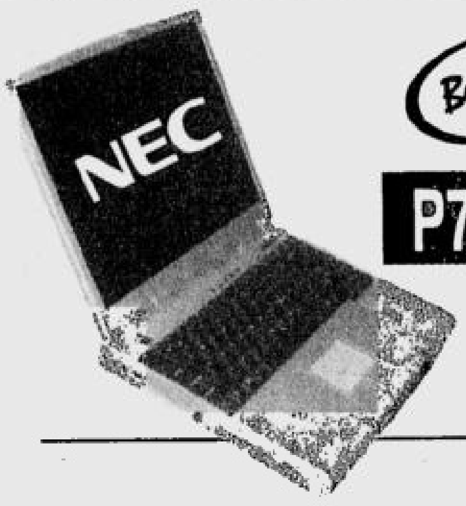

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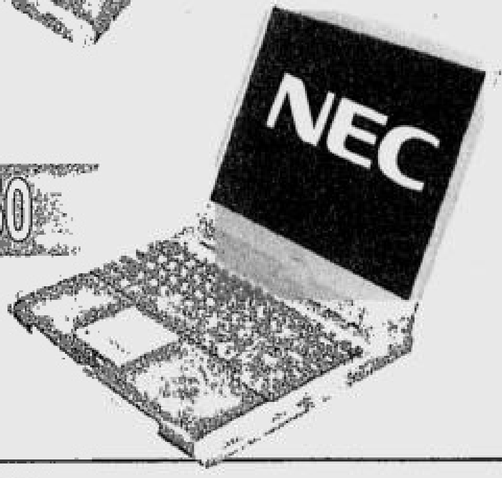

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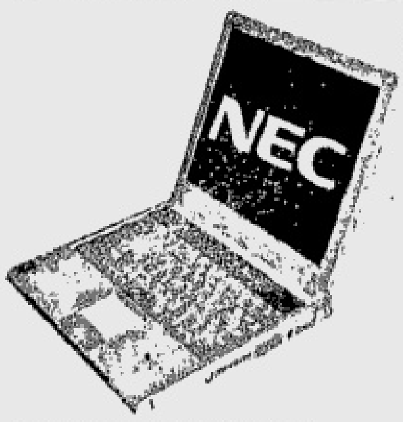

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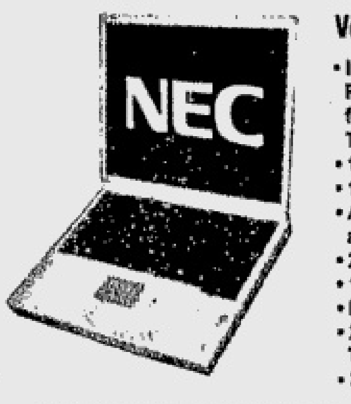

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LRTA, Lavalin fine-tuning $597-M railway extension plan

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LIGHT Rail Transit Authority and joint venture partner SNC-Lavalin Inc. are set to undertake a due diligence on the $597-million LRT line 1 South Extension project next month.

The financial closure of the electromechanical component of the project, SNC-Lavalin's portion of the project, is scheduled for Sept. 30, LRTA administrator Teodoro Cruz Jr. said in a telephone interview last week.

The government's exposure in the project was placed at 40 percent consisting mostly of the project's assets and civil works.

The joint venture agreement was signed almost two years ago, but the project was not able to take off earlier as both parties had to wait for the go-ahead signal from the National Economic and Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee.

While waiting, the government did some right-of-way procurements to facilitate the smooth implementation of the project when it gets the Neda-ICC's nod, Transportation Undersecretary for Rails Wilfredo Trinidad said in an earlier interview.

The LRTA and SNC-Lavalin last year formed the Task Force on Relocation and Resettlement to handle right-of-way acquisition problems. These include negotiations with affected property owners and communities as well as coordination with other government agencies.

Trinidad added that SNC-Lavalin remained in constant discussions with a number of creditors that could help fund the railway extension project.

The Neda-ICC finally signed the implementation agreement in December last year, giving the LRTA and the Canadian firm the right to start implementing the project.

"SNC is negotiating with creditors already. Now it is engaged in firmer talks because of the signing of the implementation agreement," Trinidad said.

With the Neda-ICC's nod, he said the government's joint-venture partner should push harder for the financial closure, adding that this should be done by December this year or January next year at the latest.

Water sector advocacy group formed

By Doris C. Dumlao

A MULTI-SECTORAL body tasked to coordinate national issues on integrated water resources management was created during a government-led water summit last Friday.

The group will pursue sustained advocacy and capacity-building interventions in the water sector.

The organization, called Philippine Water Partnership Inc., is composed of representatives from national government agencies, nongovernment organizations, government-owned and -controlled corporations, academe, local government units and the private sector.

One of the incorporators and prime movers of PWP, a non-stock, non-profit organization, is National Economic and Development Authority assistant director general Ruben Reinoso, who is acting on his personal capacity as technical advisor for Sweden-based Global Water Partnership.

In a briefing on Friday, Reinoso said the creation of PWP should provide a neutral ground for discussing issues on water resources management.

He also said the creation of PWP would make the Philippines the third country in Southeast Asia, next to Indonesia and Thailand, to form a multisectoral forum for water management issues. He also said it was the

WATER/ B6

Gov't seen saving P2.4B from procurement system

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Budget and Management is hoping to save some P2.4 billion once its electronic procurement system becomes fully operational by January next year.

"Prices in the electronic (procurement) system is at least 40 percent lower than what is available commercially," said Estanislao Granados, director for procurement at the budget department.

Granados said in an interview that the savings would come from a wider access to cheaper products and from an 80-percent reduction in advertising costs.

The electronic procurement system, mandated by Executive Order Nos. 322 and 40, provides an online mechanism where government agencies can shop for supplies using the Internet.

With the system done online, these agencies can shave a big part of their costs normally devoted for advertising.

Enhancing the procurement process is one of the priorities of the budget and finance departments. It is also one of the conditions set by the World Bank before it releases a $400-million "public finance strengthening loan."

The government currently spends over P6 billion for "common-use" supplies. These cover 350 goods and services that it needs in its daily transactions, including office supplies, furniture, trucking, hauling, maintenance and security.

"The idea is for the government units with Internet access to post their supply requirement on the (electronic procurement system)," said Granados.

The system will automatically notify registered online suppliers to post their bids, he explained.

He said another advantage of the new system was that suppliers from remote areas could also bid for the projects.

Finance magazine names best firms in RP, Asia

FINANCEASIA, a regional magazine on Asian financial markets, recently cited Ayala Corp. as the best company in the Philippines in the Asia's Best Companies 2002 survey. Ayala Corp. won the top spot in two categories: Overall best company and company most committed to corporate governance.

The survey, which will be disclosed in full in the April issue of FinanceAsia magazine, was conducted among institutional investors and equity analysts from around the globe. It covers the performance of the top companies in 10 countries in Asia. In the Philippines, Ayala Corp. was the overall best company, earning 50 out of 331 votes, or 15 percent of all votes. It was followed by San Miguel Corp., which received 36 votes, and SM Prime Holdings, with 34 votes. Other companies in the Overall Best Company category were Jollibee Foods Corp., Globe Telecom, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Ayala Land.

Ayala Group of companies figured prominently in all categories. Ayala Corp. ranked first in the company most committed to corporate governance category with 61 votes, followed by PLDT with 25 votes. In the same category, BPI, Globe and Ayala Land placed third, sixth and eighth respectively. Ayala Corp., Globe and BPI also ranked high in the best investor relations category.

Ayala Corp. ranked second best in the best financial management category, bested by San Miguel by only one vote.

Ayala Corp. recently announced a new strategy aimed at delivering increased shareholder value over the medium term. Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala, president and CEO of Ayala Corp., explained that the company needed to be much more active in the management of its portfolio and to focus on building new businesses more aggressively.

NTC, IPO urged to step up drive vs signal theft

CABLE television is seen heading for a steep decline, unless government agencies tasked to monitor and prevent rampant piracy among cable operators themselves will strictly implement the rules and regulations on copyright violations.

This admonition was aired by the Philippine Cable Television Association (PCTA), the umbrella organization of more than 300 cable television operators nationwide, to concerned government agencies such as the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC).

J. Manuel Z. Dabao, president of PCTA, said, "We're calling on these government agencies to impose their authorities and stop the CATV form of piracy, which is called signal theft. The practice of stealing and distributing stolen programs will be detrimental in the long run to the entire industry."

The illegal practice will enable its proponents to effectively bypass the required service fee, which, as a rule, all cable operators have to pay the programmers. So far, only legitimate operators are paying the programmers for the programs that they carry in their cable system, while the rest do not pay a single centavo at all.

Subscribers of cable operators using the unauthorized means of transmission will naturally benefit by getting to enjoy most of the popular cable channels at a much lower monthly service fee. This is at the expense of the legitimate operators who have to bear the burden of expensive programs and proprietary reception equipment.

Unless the concerned government agencies and the programmers undertake effective measures to stop this practice, the growth of the cable industry, which is vital to the Philippines' advancement into IT, broadband and technology convergence, will be hindered.

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RP payments position posts $873-M surplus in December

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S balance-of-payments position registered a huge surplus of $873 million in December, propped by the successful foreign borrowings of the national government and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas during the period.

The external payments surplus in December trimmed the full-year deficit to only $192 million or 62.6 percent lower from the $513-million shortfall a year ago, data from the BSP showed.

The end-2001 BOP deficit was lower by 81.97 percent or $873 million from the November level of $1.065 billion.

An indicator of investor confidence and the country's ability to settle its obligations, the BOP is influenced by two items. One is the current account that reflects movements in trade and the other is the capital and financial account that mirrors the flow of investments and borrowings.

A BOP deficit means that more funds went out of the country than the money that came in as a result of trade, investment and borrowings.

Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura also pointed out that the deficit last year was way below the BSP's worst-case deficit forecast of $2.4 billion set after the Sept. 11 tragedy and still much lower than a revised estimate of $1.1 billion in November.

"After the Sept. 11 tragedy, we were worried whether we can access the market for funds that easily. Thus, the large deficit forecast," said the central bank chief.

He said that after the national government had borrowed $414 million from the Euro bond market in November on behalf of the state-owned National Power Corp. at a price considered cheap and followed by a favorable $500-million Euro bond issue of the BSP, the estimate was revised.

In December, the national government raised $388 million from the long-term Japanese bond market then tapped the one-year dollar-deposit units of banks for $117 million worth of loans.

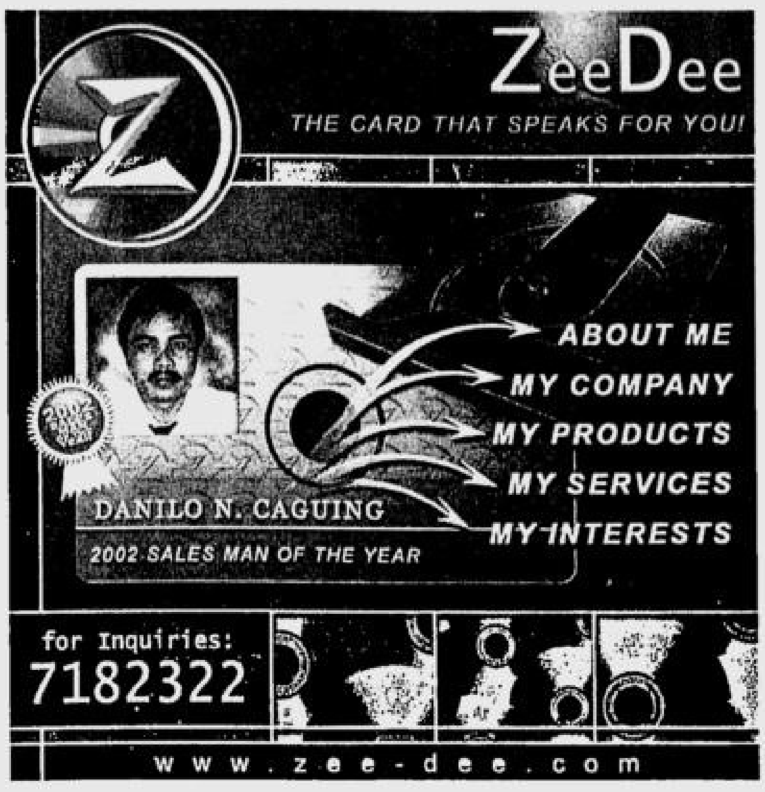
Foreign loans exceeding $1.4 billion in the last two months of 2001 had propped up the country's BOP.

"Toward the end of the year, the Philippines together with other emerging markets had started to decouple themselves from Argentina and this allowed us to access relatively cheap funds to finance the BOP," Buenaventura said.

He said the surplus position in the last two months of the year reflected the positive view on the Philippines given an improved success in the international markets shortly after the Sept. 11 tragedy.

In December, the country's dollar holdings also improved to $15.7 billion as a result of the foreign borrowings.

While the external payments position improved as a result of foreign debt, the country's current account continued to reflect the weakness of the country's export earnings.



BOI-listed investments slump 50%

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

INVESTMENTS registered with the Board of Investments dropped by half in the first two months this year as new and expansion projects become fewer and far in between.

Investors are apparently avoiding the Philippines despite President Macapagal-Arooyo's drum-beating of renewed confidence in the country and investment commitments obtained from various state visits.

BOI documents showed that investments dropped 49.88 percent to P4.13 billion from January to February this year from P8.24 billion during the same period last year.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II attributed the low investment data to investors' cautiousness following the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington.

He said that while this result was expected, the BOI also expected project registration to improve later this year as the US and Japanese economies recover from their slump.

Roxas had already projected a down year for the BOI in 2002 by setting an investment target of P50 billion this year against the P102 billion registered in 2001.

Last year's investment data was boosted by heavy capital expansion projects of telecommunication firms, and BOI officials agreed that they could not sustain such pace this year.

The top projects approved during the first two months this year were Hi-Tech Bioenergy Inc.'s P1.716-billion waste-handling facility in Malabon, Newtech Pulp Inc.'s P376-million factory for abaca and other special fibers and ETSI Technologies Inc.'s P117-million information technology project.

Gov't eyes new gas prospects in Tarlac

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PNOC Exploration Corp. said last week that it had identified new sites for possible natural gas exploration in Tarlac after the Victoria prospect was found unviable.

Rudolph Dimen, PNOC-EC external relations officer, said in a telephone interview that one of the four sites could hold 3.3 trillion cubic feet of natural gas—more than the recoverable reserve found in Camago-Malampaya.

Experts said the Camago-Malampaya field in offshore northwest Palawan could produce 2.7 trillion cubic feet of gas over the next 20 years. The project went onstream in October.

"A possible gas reservoir beneath eastern San Agustin town in Tarlac could hold (more than that)," Dimen said.

But the official stressed that the presence of the reserve could only be confirmed by drilling wells.

"We still have to prove whether the East San Agustin reservoir does contain 3.3 trillion cubic feet of gas, and if so, whether it can be drawn out," Dimen explained.

The three other possible reserves are in Paniqui, 297 billion cubic feet (bcf); South Victoria, 113 bcf and San Agustin, 19 bcf.

PNOC-EC shared the Victoria project with operator PNOC Energy Development Corp. at 15 percent and 85 percent, respectively.

On Thursday, the two firms said they had plugged and abandoned the Victoria-3 well as water was found in the reservoir.

"While the well flowed at a rate of 1 million standard cubic feet a day, extensive tests showed that the flow could not be sustained because of the water," a joint statement said.

The consortium hoped to prove the presence of a 300 bcf reserve in Victoria.

But the firms said they would be looking for bigger and better gas reserves in other areas in Central Luzon.

"Further exploration work in the area—which may include a seismic survey and/or new drilling—will depend on the evaluation results of the Victoria exploration," they added.

On Wednesday, PNOC president Thelmo Cunanan said the significance of Victoria-3 was that it proved there was gas in the area.

"If that well is not viable, future drillings may be," Cunanan said.

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How I made a killing in the gold market

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

OVER the next few weeks, I have some really interesting ideas for readers to ponder, but this week I will lighten up, as it is Holy Week and many people will be on their way to the provinces or going abroad. Later, I will tell you how I made a killing in the stock market. I shot my broker.

My wife suddenly became amorous but I said, "We can't, it's Lent." "Oh", she said, "who to, and for how long?"

My 4-year-old daughter wants to become Miss Bearbull and take over my column in 14 years time. "What will you write about?" I asked. "The same as you, I'll write about the Sock Exchange." The idea of brokers exchanging socks is very amusing and having a child so late in my life is my greatest joy.

Here is some financial news. The Comelec is appointing Arthur Andersen to verify the election results. This should *shred* some light on the outcome. In America, when people made a nuisance of themselves, such as Jimmy Hoffa, the Mafia buried him under tons of cement. We cannot do this in the Philippines. It's too expensive.

When Alan Greenspan was informed that the BSP had cut interest rates on the 3-month treasury bill by over 120 basis points, he turned a sickly green and had to be given two shots of Johnny Walker. "Incredible." He muttered, "They must have an abundance of dollars and want to get rid of them."

In my technical analysis newsletter, I told subscribers to buy dollars, then 50.96. It is now 51.15. The yield on the treasury bill is only 4.4 percent after the 20-percent withholding tax, and the banks are paying 2 percent on savings accounts and 0.5 percent on dollars. In desperation, investors are likely to divert their fixed income savings into the stock market. If you cannot make more than 4.4 percent in a year, you should not be playing the market. Incidentally, my bank made me a promo offer, a loan of P50,000 at only 2-1/4 percent a month, equal to 27 percent a year.

As Holy Week approaches, turnover will fall to minimal levels. The market has little momentum but institutions are window dressing their blue chips for the March 31 quarter. Even when the Phisix is up, there are often as many declines as advances, so sentiment is at best fragile. The historically low rates are not filtering through to the public. One major low-cost house builder is still charging 18 percent a year on its mortgages, which is far too high in present conditions.

When I went into a well-known appliance retailer, the article I wanted to buy was P9,000 cash, P10,500 credit card. I do not think that this is the fault of the credit card companies but it is a major deterrent against using them. The extra charge amounts to 16-2/3 percent a month or 200 percent a year!

Back in the '60s and '70s, when dinosaurs roamed the earth and Hawaii 50 was our favorite TV program, I used to plot the weekly price of gold on the wall in the office. It extended back decades and the chart was 10 feet wide. For all that time, the price was fixed at $35 an ounce because the US bought up the entire production of South Africa and Russia and stashed it away in Fort Knox.

Eventually, the Arabs and the French kept buying gold and the reserves ran out. America could no longer dictate the price of gold and it immediately soared to more than $100. Over a period of many years, the price reached $420 but could not go any higher. It fell to $350 and rose again to $420. Then it fell to $370 and rose to $420, fell to $390 and rose to $420. This chart is known as a rising wedge, as the top is flat but the lows are rising. When it fell to $400, I decided that it might have enough momentum to break the powerful $420 resistance level.

We were not allowed to hold physical gold in England but we could buy South African gold shares, which were freely dealt in on the London Stock Exchange. So I raised a mortgage on my house, pawned the furniture and sold my wife and children into slavery. I gave an order to invest all the money in gold shares, the moment that gold hit $425. Everybody thought I was crazy to buy at the high, not realizing that it was a significant breakout of resistance built up over many years.

At last the fateful day arrived and I put everything into gold shares. Immediately, the price of gold rose further and with it, the shares. The price advanced every day by $20 or $30 and soon I was eating Valium 2mg like candy. Then Russia invaded Afghanistan and the uncertainty sent gold soaring day after day. After another week, it had risen over $100, and I graduated to Valium 5mg. But it still kept rising, $800 in London, $850 in Hong Kong. By now, I was on a diet of Valium 10mg.

The next morning, a famous firm specializing in gold forecast that it would go to $2000. I decided that euphoria had taken over and sold everything, having doubled my money in 17 days. The gold price then plummeted to $500, rallied and fell steadily to an eventual low of about $250. I abandoned the Valium, which had kept me sane, and it was then that I decided to become a technical analyst. Without knowing it, I had done all the right things. I had bought on the breakout and sold on the euphoria.

I paid off the mortgage, got back my furniture, and retrieved my wife and children.

(You can always contact me at mrbearbull@hotmail.com during trading hours and after 5 p.m.)

BSP eyes further cut in rates

From page B3

more factories, hire more workers and expand their businesses. On the other hand, a higher reserve requirement tends to constrict money supply and lessen the chances of speculative attacks on the local currency.

Last year, the central bank raised the banks' reserve requirement to 20 percent to siphon off excess liquidity that was being used to speculate against the peso.

When the currency stabilized, the reserve requirement was brought back to 16 percent in January. That move should have released some P55 billion into the financial system.

In January, however, growth in domestic liquidity, which measures money supply, continued to slow down to 5.3 percent from 6.8 percent in December.

Instead of lending the money that became available with the cut in the reserve requirement, banks said they invested in government securities.

The central bank, however, became suspicious when domestic liquidity continued to decelerate.

Monetary authorities later learned that banks were placing more and more of their money in the central bank's deposit instruments.

Last week, the BSP set a P10-billion ceiling on the placements of banks in its deposit facilities to spur credit growth and encourage banks to lend more aggressively.

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SEC Licensed Golf & Club Shares Brokers No. 10573
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SELLING:		BUYING:	
Alabang "A"	1,680,000	Alabang "A"	1,650,000
Alabang "B"	1,650,000	Alabang "B"	1,650,000
Camp John Hay Golf	280,000	Baguio Country Club	725,000
Canyon Woods	200,000	Calatagan "A"	80,000
Eagle Ridge "A"	330,000	Camp John Hay Golf	200,000
Fontana "A/B/C/D"	Please call/75,000	Canlubang Golf	600,000
Forest Hills "A/B/C"	220/300/280	Capitol Hills	125,000
Manila Golf (Indv.)	10,100,000	Eagle Ridge "A/B/C"	330/400/550
Manila Polo	2,700,000	Forest Hill "A/B/C"	Please call
Manila Southwoods "A"	620,000	Manila Golf (Indv.)	10,000,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	656,000	Manila Golf (Corp.)	11,000,000
Mimosa Indv./C-2/C-3	150/250/275	Manila Polo	2,700,000
Mt. Malarayat "A/B/C"	350/400/550	Manila Southwoods "B"	690,000
Orchard "C"	300,000	Makati Sports "A/B"	250,000
Puerto Azul "A"	110,000	Orchard "A"	220,000
Rockwell	445,000	Puerto Azul "B"	140,000
Sherwood "A/B"	120,000/200,000	Rockwell	420,000
Tagaytay Highland Club/Golf	420/830	Sta. Elena "A/B"	1.750M/2.0M
Tagaytay Midlands	815,000	Valle Verde CC	160,000
Wack Wack	7,100,000	Valley Golf	250,000
		Wack Wack	7,000,000

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Connie Ang
Trading Manager/Real Estate Broker
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Rentals = Condo, Warehouse
Tels: (24 Hours)
253-0008
256-3186
256-6001
0918-3356871

GG & A Club Shares
SEC License Broker #007575 * As of March 25, 2002

CLUB	BUYER	SELLER
Alabang Country Club "A" (Filipino)	1,800,000	1,800,000
Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,650,000	Please Call
Baguio Country Club	700,000	750,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	70,000	90,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	100,000
Camp John Hay	250,000	280,000
Canlubang	600,000	Please Call
Canyonwoods	Please Call	330,000
Capitol Hills	120,000	135,000
Celebrity Sports Club	175,000	190,000
Eagle Ridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	Please Call
Eastridge "A"	Please Call	Please Call
Evercrest "A"	-	100,000
Forest Hills "A"	200,000	230,000
Forest Hills "B"	250,000	280,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	270,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	265,000	280,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	270,000	375,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	Please Call
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,000,000	Please Call
Manila Polo	2,600,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	630,000	650,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	680,000	750,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	-	160,000
Montemar (Individual)	-	30,000
Montemar (Corp)	50,000	
Mt. Malarayat	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "A"	220,000	[illegible]
Orchard Golf Club "B"	[illegible]	[illegible]
Orchard Golf Club "C"	[illegible]	[illegible]
Philippine Columbian		85,000
Pueblo de Oro "A"/"B"/"C"	-	Please Call
Puerto Azul	-	125,000
Quezon City Sports Club	200,000	230,000
Riviera Golf & Country Club "A"	-	Please Call
Rockwell	Please Call	550,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	150,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,625,000	1,900,000
Sta. Elena "B"	2,000,000	Please Call
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	330,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	190,000
Tagaytay Country Club	390,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	850,000	Please Call
Tagaytay Midlands	780,000	-
The Country Club	Please Call	Please Call
Valle Verde (Individual)	150,000	180,000
Valley Golf	230,000	-
Wack-Wack Golf Club	7,200,000	Please Call

PLAYING RIGHTS (Available Lessors)

Alabang "A"	25,000	Mimosa Golf	25,000
Calatagan "A"	10,000	Orchard "A"	30,000
Canlubang	60,000	Riviera "A"	15,000
Eagleridge	15,000	Sta. Elena	60,000
Eastridge "A"	20,000	Tagaytay CC	20,000
Forest Hills	30,000	Tagaytay Golf	45,000
Manila Southwoods	20,000	Tagaytay Mid.	35,000
Makati Sports "A"	25,000	Valley Golf	20,000
Manila Golf	300,000	Wack-Wack	90,000

For more information, please call:
MAKATI 840-1761 • Fax 894-3021 / 750-7694
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Safeguards . . .

From page B1

misuse of trade remedies in perpetuating monopolies and cartels. Enrile said the DTI's main recourse was to refund the importers who paid a total of P70 million for the provisional duty on cement.

But Roxas was insistent that the DTI has a "wide range of options" and the final say on the matter. "We can extend the provisional duty or impose permanent safeguard measures." He said that if the Tariff Commission was allowed to look at an issue from a narrow perspective, the DTI was also allowed to look at an issue from broader perspective to take into account the broader national interest that might not have been taken into consideration.

Roxas said that the Tariff Commission's findings were "purely recommendatory" and that it was up to the DTI to either adopt or reject this recommendation.

Roxas has been widely seen as sympathetic to the cement industry, which is currently dominated by the world's Big Three cement makers Cemex, Holderbank and Lafarge-Blue Circle which have bought 89 percent of total industry capacity since 1998.

The results of a DTI review of the issue practically parroted Philcemcor's position that the cement industry was on the brink of extinction because imports were being dumped into the country and this has cost the industry massive losses and shrinking market share.

While he agreed to endorse Philcemcor's petition to the Tariff Commission, Roxas demanded that its members keep cement prices between P125 and P135 per 40-kilogram bag apparently to avoid an embarrassing situation wherein cement prices shot up once the P20.60 provisional duty per bag was imposed last November.

A few months after the provisional duty was imposed, the DTI is currently faced with a shortage in cement in the country's biggest markets—Metro Manila, Regions 3 and 4—which resulted in a shortfall and sharp price increase.

However, unlike Roxas, the Tariff Commission did not bite the Big Three's story line. The Commission members -- Edgardo B. Abon (chair), Remedios G. Nazareth, and Ferdinand D. Tolentino — ruled that while there might have been a decline in production and total sales of cement from 1996 to September 2001 last year, this was not sharp enough or significant enough relative to prior years to constitute serious impairment in the production and sales in the country. The Commission also pointed out that the domestic manufacturers still had a commanding 80-percent share of the market.

The Commission likewise disputed Philcemcor's claims of massive losses. The Commission said that the petitioners were operating profitably and that their bottom line losses (which grew nearly tenfold to P5.13 billion) were mainly due to interest expenses and foreign exchange losses on the loans used by the Big Three to acquire these companies.

Documents showed that operating profits of Philcemcor members surged by 176 percent to P1.987 billion in 2000; losses were cut to a third (from P7.71 billion to P2.15 billion); and labor productivity improved during the period of import surge cited by Philcemcor.

The Tariff Commission could not find any link between imports and employment in the industry because employment surged 37 percent in 1999 even though imports had doubled from the previous year.

In terms of impact, the Commission noted that the construction industry, which will benefit from a competitive market for cement, has 1.584 million workers versus the less than 4,000 workers in the industry last year. The Tariff Commission noted that imports protect consumers by providing "competitive discipline" to "possible abuse of market" by the Big Three cement firms.

The Tariff Commission's findings were based on public consultations (from Jan. 28 to 31), visits to Philcemcor's plants, verification of their data and inquiry into cement companies that did not join the petition like Northern Consolidated Cement.

Water sector . . .

From page B4

first step toward forging a strong regional cooperation on this key area.

The creation of PWP was deemed necessary because of the growing competition for water due to increasing population and economic activities as well as the complexity of the water sector.

IWRM was defined by PWP's articles of incorporation as the "coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources to optimize economic and social welfare without compromising the sustainability of vital environmental systems."

Other incorporators are Ellen Pascua, Rodolfo Mateo, Jessica Salas, Yolanda Gomez, Rosario Villaluna, Margarito Alingasa, Marciano Brion, Daniel Fandino, Rolando Roque, Virgilio Rivera, Mai Flor, Angel Alejandrino, Leonardo Liongson and Cecilia Soriano.

The government, for its part, plans to overhaul the regulatory framework for raw water pricing to rationalize the nationwide allocation of dwindling water supply. The proposal is to segregate the economic and financial regulation of raw water through the creation of a new regulatory body called Water Regulatory Commission while resource and technical administration will remain with the existing National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, March 22, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	69	67.5	68	278,500
China Banking Corp.	600	610	600	610	1,950
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	40,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	36	36.5	35.5	36.5	506,800
First E-Bank Corp.	2.36	2.4	2.36	2.4	240,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	44.5	44.5	43.5	44	54,000
Philippine National Bank	67	70	67	70	29,000
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	29	27	27	1,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	10,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	21.25	21.5	21.25	21.5	3,200
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	100,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.36	0.38	1,030,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1350	1350	1350	1350	230
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1060	1075	1060	1075	48,190
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	35	35.5	35	35.5	62,900
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	800,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	785	790	785	790	9,330
Ipeople Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,400,000
Piltel	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	310,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	510	535	510	525	46,240
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.02	0.021	0.02	0.021	24,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	30	31	30	30.5	186,800
Manila Electric Co. B	45.5	47.5	45.5	46.5	1,011,800
Petron Corp.	1.82	1.84	1.8	1.8	5,713,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.91	0.91	0.9	0.9	600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	200,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	75,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	40,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	1.28	1.28	0.9	1	95,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.8	1.88	1.8	1.86	227,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	600,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	140,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	10,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	2,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.75	13	12.75	13	78,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	10,200
RFM Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	835,000
Swift Food Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	17,000
San Miguel Corp. A	47.5	47.5	47	47	63,100
San Miguel Corp. B	64.5	64.5	64.5	64.5	3,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.34	0.49	0.34	0.49	410,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.57	0.62	0.52	0.52	250,000
Ayala Corp.	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	11,348,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2	2	2	2	2,225,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	1,110,000
APC Group Inc.	0.125	0.13	0.125	0.125	1,250,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.007	20,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	210,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.78	0.81	0.78	0.81	16,010,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	560,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	500,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	520,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	500,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.041	0.041	0.041	0.041	200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.24	1,162,000
First Phil. Hldgs. Corp.	31.5	31.5	30.5	31	1,593,700
Ionics Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	2,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.9	1.88	1.9	126,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	150,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.9	4,370,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.7	280,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	3,820,000
Music Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	2,780,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	50,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4	4.15	4	4.15	25,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	450,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	20,000
Pryce Corp.	0.09	0.09	0.08	0.08	9,500,000
Philippine Seven Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	8,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.25	13.25	13	13	61,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.53	0.5	0.52	7,030,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	50,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	35.5	36	35	36	684,700
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	775	775	775	775	1,850
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	50,000
Globe Telecom Hldg. (Pdr)	770	770	770	770	2,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0006	0.0006	0.0004	0.0006	105,000,000
RFM Corp. - Pref.	4.45	4.5	4.45	4.5	6,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	4,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	2,100
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	11,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	420	420	420	420	50
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.9	6,894,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	100,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	180,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	310,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.49	5,010,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	1,450,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.32	2.42	2.32	2.42	16,505,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	50,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	2,893,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
SM Development Corp.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	50,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.7	6,272,000
Universal Rightfield Prop.	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	0.0725	500,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	2,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	2	2	2	2	120,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	8,800,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	200,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.21	0.215	0.21	0.21	500,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	10,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	260,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	9,300,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0046	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	61,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0048	0.0048	0.0046	0.0046	58,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.07	3,900,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.18	0.18	0.175	0.175	270,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	2,343,270	96,272,975.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	241,983,270	293,814,570.00
PRO	40,314,000	137,469,990.00
Mining	22,080,000	1,017,600.00
OIL	132,470,000	1,046,650.00
GRAND TOTALS:	439,195,540	529,634,285.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	582.74	UP 0.69
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,923.85	DOWN 1.68
PRO	623.13	UP 5.68
Mining	1,302.83	DOWN 17.43
OIL	1.65	DOWN 0.09
All Shares Index	759.21	DOWN 12.57
Composite	1,417.75	UP 2.28

NO. OF ADVANCES: 36; NO. OF DECLINES: 35; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 44; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 115; NO. OF TRADES: 2,299

CURRENCIES

March 22, 2002

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.133273	1.000000	51.0850
Japan	Yen	0.008589	0.007579	0.3872
United Kingdom	Pound	1.616500	1.426400	72.8676
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.145305	0.128217	6.5500
Switzerland	Franc	0.683847	0.603427	30.8261
Canada	Dollar	0.718535	0.634035	32.3897
Singapore	Dollar	0.619952	0.547046	27.9458
Australia	Dollar	0.603126	0.532198	27.1873
Bahrain	Dinar	3.006189	2.652661	135.5112
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.302206	0.266667	13.6227
Brunei	Dollar	0.618599	0.545852	27.8848
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000114	0.000101	0.0052
Thailand	Baht	0.026179	0.023100	1.1801
UAE	Dirham	0.308558	0.272272	13.9090
Korea	Won	0.000860	0.000759	0.0388
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.882400	45.0774
Brazil	Real	0.482654	0.425894	21.7568
Denmark	Kroner	0.134513	0.118694	6.0635
India	Rupee	0.023280	0.020542	1.0494
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.298230	0.263158	13.4434
Mexico	New Peso	0.125328	0.110589	5.6494
New Zealand	Dollar	0.499327	0.440606	22.5084
Norway	Kroner	0.129770	0.114509	5.8497
Pakistan	Rupee	0.018919	0.016694	0.8528
South Africa	Rand	0.098846	0.087222	4.4557
Sweden	Kroner	0.110944	0.097897	5.0011
Syria	Pound	0.022005	0.019417	0.9919
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.032348	0.028544	1.4582
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.001302	0.001149	0.0587

HIGH-ROLLERS IN THE TRADE

BIR clamps down on *'wagwag'* syndicate

BAGUIO CITY—The myth about the *wagwag* (rummage) industry's roots in Baguio's poor had just been shattered by evidence that the controversial bargain goods trade was being financed by high rollers, the Bureau of Internal Revenue here said on Friday.

Lawyer Beverly Milo, chief of the BIR assessor's division, said the unidentified financiers have managed to hide their earnings behind the *wagwag* retailers, who claimed subsistence profits.

One of the suspected *wagwag* financiers is a business celebrity, who had garnered accolades for developing the local garments business, the BIR said.

Another suspected *wagwag* financier is linked to a department store chain here.

"We actually tracked down about 200 confirmed *wagwag* retailers, and we invited them for a briefing on tax requirements, but only 20 showed up. And these retailers explained to us the reality of the *wagwag* trade," Milo said.

"The small-time *wagwag* retailers are getting the short end of this deal. They are killing themselves because of the huge volume of new retailers, but the ones getting richer are these rich financiers."

Raking in unspecified millions of pesos in daily *wagwag* revenues are distributors, who are entrenched in Hong Kong or who supervise the networking of second-hand Hong Kong clothes, designer suits and shoes through the telephones or the Internet, Milo said.

The distributors are able to pipe in hundreds of boxes worth at least P7,000 each through customs, by addressing these items as *balikbayan* shipments of clients under a pre-arranged deal.

Milo said the distributors have managed to evade taxes by strictly abiding by the regulated ceiling for tariff-free *balikbayan* shipments.

"They already know the score. They know what to avoid," she said.

The Regional Law Enforcement Coordination Council, an intelligence-sharing group composed of local line agencies, vowed to sustain its regulation of the *wagwag* trade.

A sub-committee from the BIR and the Bureau of Customs had been tasked to study the loopholes used by the *wagwag* financiers to skirt taxes.

Milo said the BIR was also looking into the ownership of buildings that were built last year to house *wagwag* outlets.

She said the buildings, which are mostly of crude construction and serve as virtual malls of *wagwag* garments, have started to dominate key sections of downtown Baguio.

The proliferation of the *wagwag* trade was allowed last year by the city government, after it noted that interest in second-hand items had fueled a remarkable growth in local tourism.

Baguio Mayor Bernardo Vergara even declared the city as the official "*wagwag* center" of the country.

NUMBERED DAYS: Used clothing, locally known as *ukay-ukay*, will soon disappear as the government clamps down on its importation.
BING GONZALES/ PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

Milo said a study by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) provided the BIR a good benchmark for that controversial trade's revenues. The study pegs the average daily profit of *wagwag* retailers at P1.2 million. ***Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Gov't tapping $20M worth of commodity grant from US

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE PHILIPPINE government is eyeing some $20 million in commodity grants from the US under its Public Law 416 program, the Department of Agriculture said.

The grant will allow the country to import US surplus commodities such as wheat and flour at low prices and under soft repayment terms.

Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor told reporters last week that the PL 416 grant was on top of the US' PL 480 program, which also extends commodity grants of up to $40 million per recipient country.

The Philippines competes with other developing countries in getting a share of the commodity loans. Commodities acquired under these grants are used to beef up local inventories or are sold to generate funds to finance agriculture projects.

The department said it was still working on the $20 million grant under PL 416. However, it was expecting the US Department of Agriculture to sign soon the other commodity grant worth $20 million under the PL 480 program.

The shipment will involve the importation of $10 million worth of wheat, $8 million worth of rice and $2 million worth of white corn.

USDA Counselor Charles Alexander has clarified in another interview that the Philippines has not been dropped off from the official list of countries receiving the said commodity loan program.

This was in reaction to Sen. Edgardo Angara earlier announcement that the Philippines was removed from the PL 480 program list because the government had diverted some of the PL 480 funds to non-agricultural projects.

Alexander said the Philippines government had to abide by the bilateral trade rules governing the PL 480 program especially in the utilization of program proceeds.

"We have an agreement that they (the government) would put the money in a special account, which they could not touch without our knowledge. If they have borrowed some money from the funds, they would have to replace it," explained Alexander.

He added that a yearly report on the status of the funds was being submitted by the Philippine government and reviewed by the USDA.

Last year, the Philippine government was said to have earned not less than P2 billion from the sale of these farm commodities.

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Nuflor was unveiled to an expectant animal health industry last March 11, 2002 at the Hotel Inter-Continental, Grand Ballroom. The event was a successful, well-attended gathering of some of the industry's leaders. On hand were representatives from the National Hog Raisers Group, the Bureau of Animal Industry, many members of the academe, some of the country's top nutritionist and swine veterinarians.

Many of the top people from Schering-Plough Animal Health's Asian and U.S. offices graced the affair. Mr. Allan Robinson, Director of Schering-Plough Animal Health Asia, Dr. Jose Maria Yu, Senior Product Manager - International, Dr. Jeff Lee, Country Manager-Korea, Dr. Lewis Lu, Country Manager-Taiwan, and Dr. Weerachi Wateetip, Country Manager-Thailand came in from their regional offices to witness the proceedings.

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From the University of Minnesota Swine Disease Eradication Center was Dr. Laura Batista who spoke on "Swine Respiratory Disease". From Schering-Plough Animal Health France came Dr. Vincent de Haas, Director, European Clinical Research. He discussed the "Safety Aspect of Nuflor Compound". And, from Schering-Plough Animal Health Mexico, Dr. Juan de Palacios, Technical Manager, spoke on "Nuflor Premix Clinical Studies Worldwide".

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Anti-poverty gab wrenches minds, not wallets

MONTERREY, Mexico—Leaders of industrialized nations threw their weight behind a new war on world poverty at a summit here but held back most of the financial ammunition requested by the United Nations.

US President George W. Bush set the tone by calling for a "compact" in which rich nations promised to boost aid if developing countries pursue free markets, human rights and democracy.

In return, he promised to lift US official development aid by 50 percent to $15 billion annually by the end of 2006.

The European Union, too, said it would commit an extra $7 billion to its $25.4-billion annual aid budget by 2006.

Summit organizers can boast that the gathering leveraged combined European and US commitments—each made several days before leaders had even set foot in Mexico—of $12 billion.

But that figure still falls far short of a UN estimate that rich nations must double aid to $100 billion a year to meet an agreed goal of halving the proportion of people in abject poverty—now numbering 1.2 billion—by 2015.

In fact, the 16-page Monterrey Consensus made no reference to the target of doubling aid, which was removed from an earlier draft.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan threw the figure back at world leaders here, however. "The clearest, most immediate test of the Monterrey spirit will be whether donor countries provide that aid," he said.

By that measure, the Monterrey initiative failed.

But the richest nations undeniably stemmed a long slide in aid.

"The messages that are coming through is that aid, which was really becoming marginalized, is being increased significantly by two major players," said Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinnon.

"That will send a very strong signal to all other aid donors."

Developing countries too conceded ground by agreeing on the need to show that aid is being used productively rather than feeding corruption, ineptitude or harsh regimes.

"Donor bashing is popular," Pakistani Finance Minister Shawkat Aziz said. "But nobody wants to put money in a bottomless pit. To expect good governance and good performance by developing countries is only fair."

Behind the questions on aid, however, the conference revealed a clear split between the heavy US emphasis on the critical role played by markets and the European insistence that aid provided the groundwork for the poorest nations to enjoy the fruits of capitalism.

Bush stressed the prominent role played by trade. His treasury secretary, Paul O'Neill, noted that foreign direct investment in China alone equaled the entire world aid budget.

But the French scorned the poor US record on aid volumes.

And the European commissioner for development and humanitarian aid, Poul Nielsen, reminded the conference that only 3 percent of long-term private investment went to sub-Saharan Africa.

"Something has to happen. We have to create a background that makes Africa more interesting for investment. This is where ODA (official development assistance) comes in."

Anti-poverty activists had little to say for the 16-page Monterrey Consensus.

"It cannot be described as a consensus when the voices of millions of people have not been heard," said Greenpeace campaigner Paul Horsman.

"The consensus is a consensus between industry and government."

Zambian Congress of Trade Unions general secretary Sylvester Tembo agreed.

"What concerns us now is the fact that the Monterrey Consenus does not depart from the Washington Consensus with its model of globalization and structural adjustment policies," he told a round-table discussion.

"This has already wreaked havoc on our economies and affected the lives of workers and their families. Massive job losses have occurred owing to privatization and also the closure of industries."

Schools lacked resources and hospitals lacked drugs, Tembo said. Meanwhile, poor people were unable to pay user fees for education and health. *AFP*

Japan, China set to conclude currency deal

NEW YORK—Japan and China are expected to conclude next Thursday a currency swap agreement aimed at heading off any balance of payments crises in China, several Japanese media reported.

According to the reports from three major Japanese newspapers and a news agency, monitored in New York on Friday, the move is part of a stabilization program for Asian currencies agreed upon by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations as well as China, South Korea and Japan, in the wake of 1997 Asian currency crisis.

Japan would supply China with yen in exchange for yuan if China's balance of payments deteriorates sharply under the agreement to be signed by Bank of Japan Governor Masaru Hayami and People's Bank of China Governor Dai Xianglong in Tokyo on March 28.

Japan has already concluded similar agreements with Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea. *Reuters*

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AP

A WOMAN with her handicapped child seen begging in Bombay, India, as a Bollywood ad is seen hung on a passenger bus in the background. Bollywood, the Indian film industry hub's popular name, is a city of extreme contrast between the haves and the have nots. World leaders will open a conference in Mexico on March 25 to discuss how to channel more money to help eradicate poverty among the world's most miserable. The meeting's aim is to improve the lives of the 1 billion people who live on less than a dollar a day.

United recalling 1,300 workers, adding 900

CHICAGO—In another sign of the US airline industry's modest recovery, United Airlines says it is recalling an additional 1,300 employees who were laid off last fall and hiring 900 more in key markets.

The ramp, customer and cabin service employees are being recalled at United's five hubs—Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington-Dulles—to help the carrier meet its expanded summer schedule.

"To support the increased operation, we have already begun to recall employees who were placed on furlough status last fall," said Patti Carson, a United vice president. "While we still have a long road ahead of us, United is very happy to recall more than a thousand of our employees."

United announced earlier this month that it was adding 170 daily flights to its summer schedule, effective June 7. That would bring the airline's schedule to almost 1,900 daily flights, compared with 2,400 before the attacks. *AP*

Internet squeezes travel agents out of business

WASHINGTON—The move to the Internet for many travel reservations is putting the squeeze on travel agents as ailing airlines move to cut out the middle man.

That became apparent over the past week, as Delta Air Lines, followed by most major US carriers, announced an end to a longstanding policy of paying standard "base" commissions to US-based travel agents for airline tickets.

Delta said the move was a response not only to the industry's financial straits, but to the growing movement by travelers to go online and make reservations—a much cheaper way of selling tickets.

"Technology has fundamentally changed airline ticket distribution practices," Delta said in a statement.

"The cost of distribution through electronic channels is much lower than traditional means. This new market reality is forcing both Delta and travel agents to adapt."

Financial concerns are paramount for the airlines, which saw record losses last year in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks. *AFP*

Kmart's reigning restructurer aiming to bring it back

NEW YORK—Bankruptcy lawyer Jack Butler, who has restructured some of the biggest US firms, says getting onto the field to referee a football game on a crisp Friday evening is what he likes to do best.

"There is nothing more exciting than being the guy who trots down into the end zone and signals the start of the game," Butler said. "In that 15 seconds, while everyone is anticipating the kickoff, everybody's equal. Nobody's got an advantage over the other guy."

Now he's trying to keep the game from getting out of control for his client, Kmart Corp., as he represents them in the biggest bankruptcy case ever for a retailer. It will test his skill as a referee who can get tough when a bad situation arises in the heat of battle—but knows how to be diplomatic as well, colleagues say.

"He's one of those bankruptcy lawyers who can be combative when that's necessary but are practical enough to know a deal has to get done," said William Repko, head of The Restructuring Group at JP Morgan, who is working with Butler on restructuring Kmart.

A weekend football referee for decades who is known as ambitious, aggressive and fiercely protective of his clients, Butler is co-head of the restructuring practice at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom and now steering discount retailer Kmart through its second restructuring. With thousands of jobs hanging in the balance, it's one of the most high-profile restructuring cases any lawyer has had to handle.

Butler, 46, and his crew—comprised of fellow Skadden lawyers Peter Allan Atkins, N. Lynn Hiestand, J. Eric Ivester, Marian Wexler, David Friedman and Lawrence Frishman—have been burning the midnight oil to get Kmart out of bankruptcy and make it competitive.

Cleaning up Kmart

Kmart became the largest retailer ever to file for bankruptcy protection after a combination of intense competition from rivals Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Target Corp. and weak holiday sales left the retailer strapped for cash.

Wal-Mart is known for its low prices, and Target has distinguished itself in the discount market by attracting more upscale shoppers with its trendy clothes and designer housewares. Kmart lacks such a niche, analysts say, and must find one to survive.

Key elements in a successful bankruptcy are speed in execution, a good management team and a delicate balance of diplomacy and tenacity.

Kmart has a long road ahead before it can exit from bankruptcy, and it set an ambitious target date of July 2003, according to retail industry analysts. But with Butler at the helm of the process Kmart has been making rapid changes, industry experts say.

"We're looking to execute this with speed, probably faster than any other major retailer has gone through Chapter 11," Butler said in an interview. "From a competitive standpoint, every month you're in Chapter 11 you lose ground. Your competitors build stores, you don't."

Retailers need the financial clout to fund store openings and expansions, and also to manage inventories that respond to consumers' fast-changing appetites.

"We need to get back out and commit capital expenditures and you can't do that inside Chapter 11 for an extended period of time."

Earlier this week, his client, Kmart, won bankruptcy court approval to keep its relationships with domesticity doyenne Martha Stewart and other name-brand product makers. It also recently replaced chief executive Charles Conaway with turnaround specialist James Adamson and said it planned to close 13 percent of its more than 2,000 stores and cut 22,000 jobs.

The retailer needs to have a clear and cogent message about what differentiates it, and why shoppers should want to spend there, Butler said. Kmart recently launched a new television advertising campaign directed by filmmaker Spike Lee, which tried to establish the company as "The Store That Understands What Really Matters In Life."

Prepared and persuasive

Butler is known for his persuasive personality, and colleagues say he can take a roomful of adversaries and turn most of them into allies.

"(Butler) is very well prepared and persuasive. When he argues something he knows he's right," said JP Morgan's Repko. "He's a terrific guy, and being likable—that's part of the battle, people have to want to agree with you."

Kmart isn't the only high-profile client he's managed. He is particularly proud of his work with sewing machine maker Singer Co., in which he installed a new management team and got the creditors on board in a multinational workout, and office equipment maker Xerox Corp., which was expected to file for Chapter 11 but has since survived. *Reuters*

UAL pulls plug on business jet unit Avolar

CHICAGO—UAL Corp., parent of United Airlines, said on Friday it would shut its business jet unit, Avolar, after finding no viable options for the company in an industry hurt by the Sept. 11 attacks and the weak economy.

UAL said earlier in March it had stopped seeking outside investors for Avolar, which offered part ownership in corporate jets, and planned no further investment of its own.

The No. 2 US carrier formed Avolar in May 2001 to tap corporate America's appetite for business jet travel, but UAL posted an industry record net loss of $2.1 billion last year following the attacks and the weak economy.

UAL decided to look for outside investors for the start-up following the attacks, but a months-long search was called off in early March and Avolar president Stuart Oran stepped down.

In a short statement, UAL chief executive Jack Creighton said closing Avolar was "the most prudent move possible."

Creighton, who took over as chief executive in October, said closing the unit would protect United from further financial exposure and help it focus on core business. *Reuters*

AP

HUNDREDS of Argentines line up to buy dollars at Banco Municipal in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Argentina's peso tumbled to new lows on Friday, falling for the fourth consecutive day amid renewed uncertainty over the country's troubled economy.

McDonald's issues Q1 earnings warning

CHICAGO—McDonald's Corp. warned Friday that its first-quarter earnings, hurt by weak currencies, would be slightly below Wall Street's expectations despite some encouraging signs from its European and US restaurants.

The fast-food giant said while European sales have rebounded strongly this year—rising 8 percent in constant currencies through February—the weakened euro weighed on results.

Also, concerns about the safety of beef in Japan continued to affect sales in that country. Japanese consumers have been leery of beef since a September outbreak of mad cow disease, although McDonald's stresses that its restaurants in Japan use beef only from Australia and New Zealand.

Another continuing weak spot is Latin America, where sales were down 3 percent for January and February even excluding the considerable impact of currency changes.

The outlook was better for the company's US business, where sales for the first two months of 2002 were 3 percent higher than the same period a year ago.

Jack Greenberg, McDonald's chair and chief executive, attributed the gains in part to McDonald's renewed efforts on quality, service and cleanliness, a push that resulted from increased customer complaints.

"We believe our US initiatives will drive the business forward and expect sales to increase in the low single digits for the quarter and mid-single digits for the year as we gain momentum," he said.

Excluding new restaurants, same-store sales were flat. And McDonald's said it expected operating earnings from the US business to decline in the low- to mid-single digits as a result of $22 million in payments to help stores change the way their front counters handle orders.

Analyst Ann Gurkin said it was too early to say if the US initiatives were working, but she still found the results encouraging.

"Sales are a little bit better than I expected in the US," said Gurkin of Davenport and Co. "Certainly sales in Europe were better than we'd looked for."

McDonald's said it expected to take a $45-million non-cash charge for the quarter for closing 32 under-performing restaurants in Turkey and related to the impairment of assets in Latin America. It also anticipates a $100-million non-cash charge for the impairment of goodwill, primarily the result of weakened economies in Latin America.

Excluding those charges, the hamburger purveyor now projects first-quarter earnings of 29 cents to 30 cents per share—at the low end of its previously issued guidance range and just below the 31-cent consensus estimate of analysts surveyed by Thomson Financial/First Call. *AP*

Fed's McTeer criticizes tariff

ATLANTA—Robert McTeer, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, on Friday criticized US tariffs on steel imports as an effort to "create artificial scarcity and drive up" domestic prices.

Earlier this month, President George W. Bush decided to impose tariffs ranging from 8 percent to 30 percent on steel products from Europe, Asia and Latin America to help the struggling US steel industry.

"The other day we had our latest example of shutting a product out of the country with high tariffs to create artificial scarcity and drive up the domestic price," McTeer told a meeting sponsored by the French Consulate General in Atlanta.

"You can see wages rise in the steel industry after the tariffs. What you won't see is when sales, output and employment fall in the industries that use the more expensive steel," McTeer said.

US steel companies, including Bethlehem Steel Corp. and WHX Corp.'s Wheeling-Pittsburgh, are pressured by weakened demand and ballooning retiree health and pension costs. Many companies, including National Steel Corp., have filed for bankruptcy since 1997.

The duties, which took effect on Wednesday, triggered a storm of criticism from steel-producing countries worldwide.

McTeer made no comments on current US monetary policy.

He also criticized the idea put forth by some observers that increased spending on security following last year's airborne attacks on the United States would be a "silver lining" because of the economic activity it would spur. ***Reuters***

US companies hope they won't be EU targets in steel trade war

NEW YORK—Prominent US producers of juice and motorcycles and their communities were hopeful they wouldn't become pawns in a trade war, as it was reported that the European Union could counter new steel tariffs with tariffs that would target companies from politically sensitive states.

On Friday, The Wall Street Journal reported that the European Union could impose tariffs on Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based Harley-Davidson Inc. and Bradenton, Florida-based PepsiCo Inc. unit Tropicana because they were located in states that were decided by razor-thin voting margins in President George W. Bush's 2000 election victory.

The moves would be a retaliation to Bush's decision earlier this month to impose tariffs of up to 30 percent on imports of steel from Europe, Asia and Latin America.

"We're hopeful that the European Union and America will work out differences before any (tariffs are imposed)," said Harley-Davidson spokesperson Joe Hice.

Even if tariffs were imposed, Hice said it would not have a major impact on the company's bottom line because the European market represented only 10 percent of Harley-Davidson's sales and it could sell the motorcycles elsewhere.

The Journal reported that any actions taken by the European Union would be a year away.

"All Tropicana beverages sold in Europe were produced in Europe," said Charles Nicolas, a spokesperson for PepsiCo's international division.

Tropicana's European plants still import raw orange juice from Florida, among other regions worldwide such as Brazil. But Nicolas said the company would not comment on what percentage of the juices came from each region.

Mayor John Norquist of Milwaukee, a Democrat, said Bush's decision to impose tariffs on steel would hurt the Wisconsin economy more than any action by the European Union because its industries tended to use steel, not produce it.

"We buy steel and make Harley-Davidson's out of them, which are sold all over the world," said Mayor Norquist. "(President Bush) is making it harder for us."

Norquist said he had no hard feelings for the European Union and that he understood its motivations.

"I just hope the European Community understands that Wisconsin has nothing against them and we're not the ones that imposed the tariff," he said. ***Reuters***

Palm recovers from 2001 woes, sees profits ahead

NEW YORK—Shaking off a troubled year that saw it go from dominating the handheld computer market to a possible takeover target, Palm Inc. is once again flexing its muscles and optimistically looking toward turning a profit in the near term.

Palm, of Santa Clara, California, on Thursday posted a third-quarter loss before special items of 2 cents a share, 2 cents better than Wall Street expected, on revenue that was some $40 million greater than forecasts.

The financial news confirmed for some that Palm had awakened from the nightmare that was 2001, when it struggled to deliver new products on time, fought a price war that pinched its margins and endured constant talk it might be bought by Sony Corp. or International Business Machines Corp. or perhaps merge with rival Handspring Inc.

"It's really a classic turnaround," said JP Morgan analyst Paul Coster. "Fiscal discipline has been restored. I don't want to belittle the strategic challenge ahead of them, because it's still quite considerable, but they are heading in the right direction."

Investors agreed; on Friday Palm shares jumped 22 percent to close at around $3.86, its highest level in about two months. It was the Nasdaq's third most active issue.

Led by a new leadership team, Palm aims in 2002 to make good on its plans to feed the desires of both consumer and corporate users, beef up its software for new wireless and multimedia devices and fend off the challenge of Microsoft Corp., which also make personal digital assistant software..

Palm's to-do list looked quite similar last year, but analysts found such an aggressive plan hard to swallow, considering Palm's missteps with its roll-out of its m500 series of high-end devices, and an aborted merger with Extended Systems Inc.

While it fought those and other battles, its competitors gathered steam.

Handspring whet consumer appetites with Treo, its combination personal digital assistant and mobile phone, and Microsoft upgraded its software that power handheld computers made by companies such as Compaq Computer Corp. ***Reuters***

Moody's trims Lucent debt rating

NEW YORK—Moody's Investors Service on Friday cut its ratings for Lucent Technologies Inc. two notches, saying the telecommunications equipment provider would suffer a longer and deeper downturn in demand for its products than Moody's expected, delaying its return to profitability.

Moody's cut Murray Hill, New Jersey-based Lucent's senior unsecured debt rating to "B2," its fifth highest "junk" grade out of 11, from "Ba3," and its preferred stock rating to "Caa2," its eighth highest junk grade, from "B3." Moody's rating outlook is negative.

Downgrades ordinarily raise borrowing costs, and Moody's actions affect about $7.8 billion of debt.

The cut in Lucent's senior debt rating was Moody's sixth since December 2000, totaling nine notches, from "A2," a medium investment grade.

"The most significant concern Lucent faces is the continued fall-off in aggregate customer demand," said Robert Ray, a senior vice president at Moody's. "Every time it seems like Lucent nears a bottom, the climate worsens."

Moody's also said that while Lucent complied with financial covenants in its bank agreements, weaker operating performance "will likely put pressure on the prospective compliance."

Responding to the downgrade, Lucent spokesperson Michelle Davidson said, "we report on those covenants quarterly, and we expect to continue to be in full compliance with those covenants this quarter as well.

"We don't expect the downgrade to have a significant impact on our business, and we continue to have sufficient cash to run the business," she added.

Lucent shares closed Friday on the New York Stock Exchange at $4.59, down 19 cents, or 4 percent. They have fallen 59 percent in the last year. ***Reuters***

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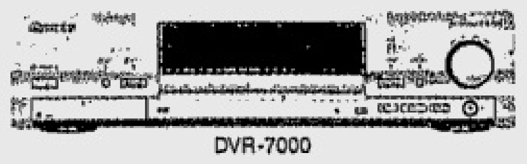

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MTS Type	Quantity (Pcs.)
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Distribution	4,400,000
Corn	400,000
Total	10,500,000

Bidders representative shall be limited to the owner/stockholder/official/employees of the manufacturing company/corporation duly authorized to represent the same. The schedule of bidding activities is as follows:

March 25, 26, April 1 & 2, 2002	-	Issuance of List of Pre-qualification Requirements
April 3, 4 & 5, 2002	-	Submission of Pre-qualification Documents/Requirements
April 18, 2002 (10:00 AM)	-	Pre-bidding Conference/ Payment of Application Fee/ Issuance of Tender Forms
April 22, 2002 (9:15 - 10:00 AM) (10:15 AM)	-	Submission of Bid Proposals Opening of Bid Proposals

Venue of the pre-bidding conference, submission and opening of bids shall be at the NFA Central Office Boardroom, 10th Floor, Matimyas Building, 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Quezon City.

Pre-qualification forms and requirements of the bidding can be secured from and submitted to BAC Secretariat, ODAFA, 7th Floor, NFA-Central Office. Bidding documents/Tender forms may likewise be secured from BAC Secretariat and the same shall be issued to pre-qualified bidders upon payment of P5,000.00 non-transferable/non-refundable application/bidding fee.

For inquiries, please contact the BAC Secretariat at Telephone Nos. 712-0453 and 712-3341 local 8702-8704.

NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY/INFORMALITY OF THE BIDS RECEIVED AND TO ACCEPT ONLY SUCH BIDS WHICH ARE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY.

(Sgd.) MICHAEL ANGELO G. PADERANGA
Deputy Administrator & Chairman, BAC

(PDI – Mar. 23 & 25, 2002)

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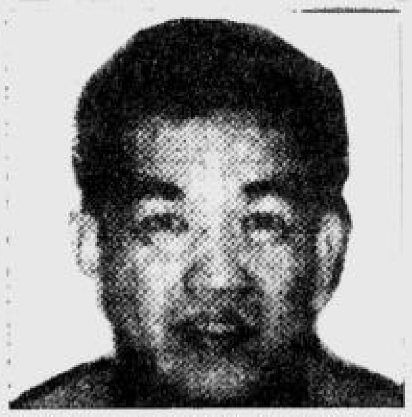

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is given that the estate of sps. Pedro V. Reyes & Ma. Consolacion V. Reyes was extrajudicially settled among their heirs per Doc. 62, Page 13, Book 1, Series of 2002 before Not. Public Maria Donata B. Cruz of Q.C. PDI-March 18, 25 & April 1, 2002

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Our Dearly Beloved

LORETO "BEN" T. UY

Peacefully joined our Lord
on March 20, 2002 at the age of 63.

His loving wife **GLORIA**; children **ARIES** and **ANGIE**; **ALVIN** and **MARIVIC**; **AIMEE**; **MARY ANN**; grandchildren **ALEXANDER KEITH** and **AUBREY KHRISTINE** request the relatives, friends and readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at #198 A. Mendoza Street, Biñang 2nd, Bocaue, Bulacan.

Interment will be on March 27, 2002 after the 3:00 p.m. Mass at St. Martin of Tours Parish Church.

Message of Thanks

THANK YOU

to all who shared in our sorrow at the demise of our beloved **IMA**.

ASUNCION G. DAVID

(February 2, 1914 - February 24, 2002)

Your presence, Mass and prayer offerings,
messages of sympathy, thoughtful deeds, donations,
and flowers have made us realize that our **IMA**
has left a legacy of love among families,
relatives and friends.

The **Botor** and **Benjamin clan** of **Baao, Camarines Sur** and **Naga City**

announces with deep sorrow,
the passing away of our beloved

Ulysses Francis "Yul" Botor y Benjamin

who died on March 21, 2002 at 7:00 o'clock in the morning at Naga City at the age of 42.

His remains now lie in state at Funeraria Imperial, Peñafrancia Avenue, Naga City. The burial will be on March 26, 2002 at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon at Eternal Gardens Memorial Park, Balatas, Naga City.

I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.
2 Timothy 6:7

With deep gratitude, we thank all of you who were with us, offered Masses, remembered us in prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy in the hour of our bereavement.

May the knowledge that Papang is now in the warm embrace of our loving Father fill us all with peace & renewed faith.

The Family of the late

ATTY. MOISES L. SALONGA, SR.

(†) February 14, 2002

FR. MEMENG
TINA & JIMMY; CORA & WILLIE; CARMS & JIM;
CAROL & PHILIP; CYNTHIA & GREG; MARLYN;
and all the grandchildren

SIMEON C. LOPEZ

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 23, 2002
at the age of 78.

His bereaved wife **NETTY**; children **ROLLY LOPEZ, ETHEL ROCHA, FELY MACARAIG, CHERRY DE DIOS, ANNIE MARTINEZ** and **SR. MONICA, OSA**; brothers and sisters, in-laws, and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 27, 2002 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at Arlington Memorial, Hope Chapel.

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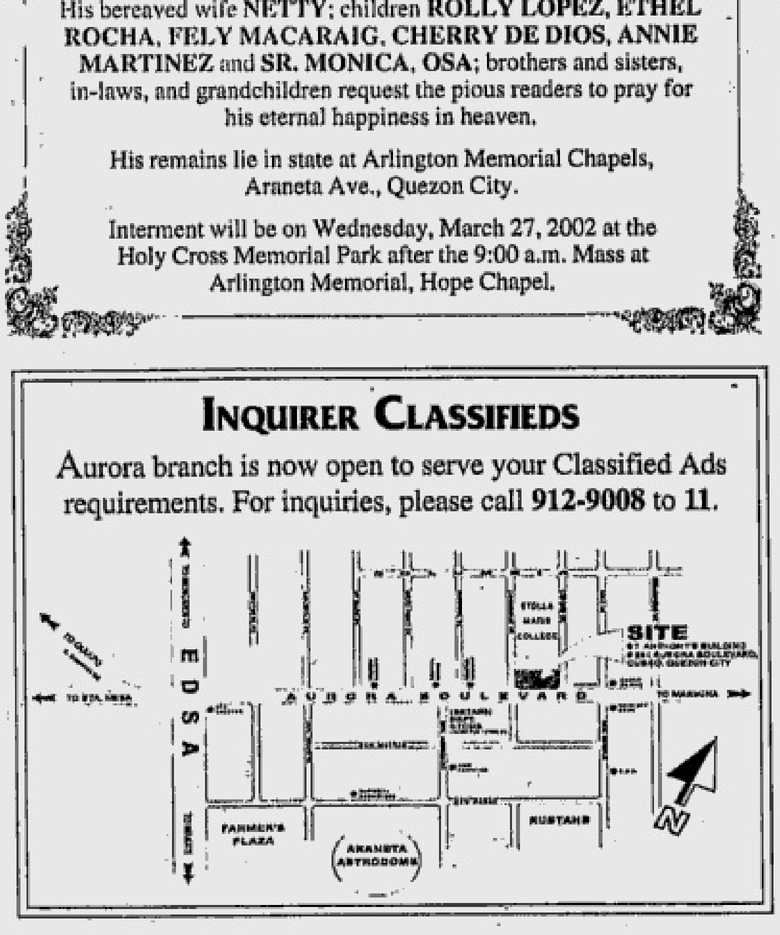

Remedios Lopez Angeles

Peacefully joined her Creator on March 23, 2002
at the age of 84.

Her husband, **Roberto**
children, **Martha, Angelito** and **Marilyn**
and grandchildren, **Marietta, Mylenne** and **Angelito, Jr.**

Her brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces
Saturno† and **Maria Ramirez**
    Cyrus and **Marilou**, **Camil** and **Biloy**,
    Manuel and **Vicky**, **Phillip** and **Cecille**,
    Pepe and **Florian**, **Ching** and **Fe**, **Ricky** and **Helen**,
    Angelo†
Jose and **Milagros Lopez**
    Johnny and **Mavi**, **Tina**, **Jerry** and **Denise**, **Gary**
    Bob and **Melinda**
Justita Lopez
Amado and **Aida Lopez**
    Jaime and **Marissa**
Epifania Lopez†
Matea Lopez
Gregorio† and **Rustica Moral**
    Patrick, **Allen** and **Mayette**, **Paolo**, **Joseph**
Rosario Lopez
Rosie Lopez

enjoin the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Santuario de San Jose Parish Hall, East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

Interment will be on March 27, 2002 at the Naic Catholic Cemetery after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the Immaculate Conception Shrine in Naic, Cavite at 2:00 p.m.

PRUDENCIA G. SALAS

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on March 23, 2002.

Her children **Nannette S. Ferreria, Grace S. Sandiko, Dave G. Salas**; children-in-law **Joe Ferreria, Melvyn Sandiko, Jasmin Gerio, Victor Lim**; and grandchildren **Jacqueline, Joseph, John Benedict, Vanessa, Nygel, Jessica, Nicole, Joshua, Victoria, Jannette, Veni Jessamine**, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her cremated remains lie in state at St. Jerome Church, Alabang Muntinlupa City.

Interment will be on Monday, April 1, 2002 at St. James the Great Church, Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa at 10:00 a.m.

I am the way the
truth and the life.
No one comes to
the Father except
through me.
John 14:6

"My soul find rest to God alone from Him comes my salvation."
Psalms 62:2

IN LOVING MEMORY
on the
Third Death Anniversary
of

PATRICIA G. DEL ROSARIO

of Sta. Isabel, Malolos, Bulacan and Quezon City
who joined her Creator on 25 March 1999.

HOLY MASSES will be offered today at the following churches:

6:00 AM	**Sta. Isabel Parish**, Sta. Isabel, Malolos, Bulacan
6:00 AM	**Barasoain Church**, Malolos, Bulacan
6:00 AM	**Holy Spirit Parish**, BF Homes, Quezon City
6:00 AM	**Mt. Carmel Shrine**, New Manila, Quezon City
6:30 AM	**Christ the King Seminary**, Rodriguez Boulevard, Quezon City
6:45 AM	**Our Lady of Miraculous Medal Church**, Project 4, Quezon City
7:00 AM	**Malolos Cathedral**, Malolos, Bulacan
12:00 Noon	**St. Joseph Shrine**, Aurora Boulevard, Project 3, Quezon City
6:00 PM	**Sto. Domingo Church**, Quezon Boulevard, Quezon City

Her loving spouse **Atty. CANDIDO**; their children **NAPOLEON & Myrna, Atty. Candido, Jr. & Tessie**; **Asst. Solgen Roman & Louttie**; **AMALIA**; **Jesus & Orpha, CANDIDO, III & Bernette**; **ANGELA & JOJO**; sisters and brothers-in-law; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

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INFOTECH

Editor **Leo Magno**

Survey details obstacles faced by online retailers

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

THE INABILITY of consumers to touch and feel products sold on the Internet is the biggest obstacle faced by retailers in bringing their products online, not just in the Philippines but in the rest of Asia Pacific.

A survey conducted for MasterCard International showed that 40 percent of retailers said that consumers still want to touch and feel the goods before they would buy a specific product.

Another barrier was order fulfillment, with 27 percent of the retailers saying that it is an obstacle in the online retail business. Order fulfillment refers to the system for the delivery of the product once the "buy" button is clicked on the website.

Other equally important obstacles to be overcome by retailers are site security, profitability and trust that consumers buying on the Internet would really end up with the products they paid for through the Net.

On the other hand, consumers have not yet been convinced to purchase products online mainly because of the security of their credit card information, with 79 percent of respondents saying that it is a main problem.

About 77 percent do not feel comfortable disclosing their personal details, 48 percent do not trust Web-based retailers, 40 percent are unfamiliar with online establishments, 21 percent find the ordering process too complex and 20 percent feel that the order process is just too long.

MasterCard senior vice president Jeff Portelli explains that these concerns are typical of a technology that is just gaining steam, but that eCommerce is still the way to go with over $3.14 trillion expected to flow through the Internet.

E-Commerce in 2000 reached only $350.38 billion, of which 47 percent came from the United States, 20 percent from Western Europe, 21 percent from Japan, 5 percent from Asia and 7 percent from the rest of the world.

In the United States, 22 percent of the products bought online were under the apparel category, 15 percent were software and music, 14 percent were books and 10 percent were tickets for concerts or productions.

Including other online buyers, 29 percent of products bought online were books, 20 percent were CDs or music, 11 percent were software and 10 percent were for apparel and food.

Interactive adventure race scheduled for launch of YOU.inq7.net website

By Joey G. Alarilla
INQ7.net

ADDICTED to reality TV? Proud of your survival skills? Blessed with a keen sense of direction? Time to put your skills to the test and have fun, while getting a chance to win cool prizes. Not a bad way to spend a Saturday.

On April 6, several teams will strive to outwit, outplay and outlast (oops, wrong contest) each other in an interactive adventure called the E-mazing Race.

Instead of being stranded in Africa, the Australian outback or an island in the South Pacific, the teams will start out at the Glorietta Activity Center. The E-mazing Race, however, will take them along the length and breadth of the mall—and even into cyberspace.

The teams will have to log on to the YOU website at http://you.inq7.net to discover clues to their next destination. This is apart from the various mental and physical challenges that contestants will have to overcome as they make their way to various stations throughout the mall. By the time they reach the finish line, the teams will be intimately acquainted with the mall and its different stores.

While details of the many obstacles and hazards that await racers are hush-hush, rest assured that hungry lions won't be out to make you their lunch, and that you won't get voted out by scheming tribe members. No guarantee, though, that schizophrenic spaghetti won't attack you.

The E-mazing Race, which is now online at http://you.inq7.net/promo/emazing/, is just one of the many fun activities in store for you during the day-long celebration of YOU's formal launch.

YOU is INQ7.net's interactive portal for the youth. This user-generated site and online community is composed of three main sections: 2bU!, Cross-Campus and Junior Inquirer. INQ7 Interactive Inc. is the joint online and multimedia news and information delivery company of the Philippine Daily Inquirer Inc. and GMA Network Inc.

If you'd like to put your own wits, strength and will power to the test, the online nomination of team members is now ongoing at http://you.inq7.net/promo/emazing/. You can ask your friends and relatives to send in their nominations via e-mail to emazingrace@inq7.net, or you can nominate your own teams. The e-mail message should contain the team name, names of participants, ages and their schools. Team names should be limited to one word with no special characters.

Each team should have a maximum of three members—either a combination of two males and one female or two females and one male. If you decide to field an all-female or all-male team, you will receive a penalty of 20 minutes during the race. Deadline for the submission of online nominations is March 25, 2002.

So, think you've got what it takes? Join the E-mazing Race and prove that you're one of the fittest—and that all those hours spent at the mall have paid off, after all.

Fewer than expected attendees at Visual Studio launch

By Joel D. Pinaroc
INQ7.net

LOCAL developers, numbering about a thousand, have converged at the launching of Microsoft's Visual Studio.Net, the latest programming tool positioned for the enterprise segment of the Philippine market from the US-based software behemoth.

According to Mae Rivera, Microsoft Philippines marketing and communications manager, the figure may have been lower than what Microsoft expected, but was nevertheless significant enough to affirm the growing interest of local developers in the new product, touted to be a tool programmers need for new generation, Web-enabled, applications.

Microsoft Philippines launched the product for developers in a two-day, seminar cum product showcase dubbed "Developer Days 2002" held last week.

"We invited around four to five thousand developers. Although the turn-out was only about a thousand, these are all paying attendees, showing that the interest for the product is really there," Rivera said.

Rivera also said the event drew students from top-tier schools such as University of the Philippines, La Salle and Ateneo, among others, as well as computer schools such as STI.

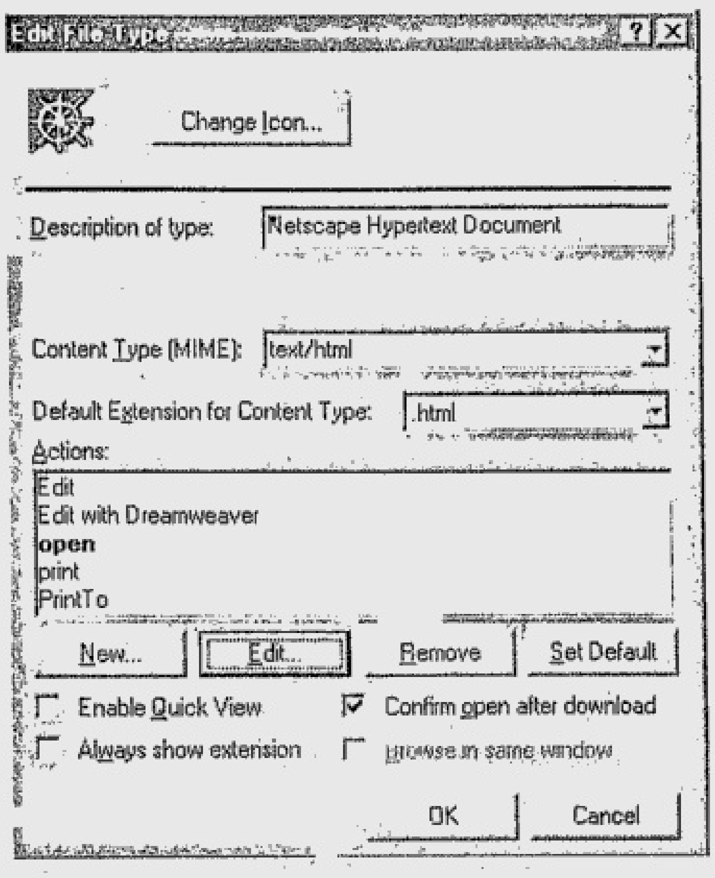
"Our goal really is to increase the number of certified Microsoft professionals in the country. Compared with India, which has around 100,000 MS professionals, the Philippines only has a thousand," Rivera said.

The Visual Studio launch also generated positive feedback from some of the developers who attended the event including regional independent software vendors or ISVs.

Rodney Jao, the head of a Davao-based ISV disclosed that he was "surprised" with what developers can do with Visual Studio, even before the final version of the product was officially unveiled.

"Developers were given the beta version of Visual Studio, a few months ago. I was surprised that applications developed using the tool actually ran," Jao said.

He also disclosed that Visual Studio.Net is surprisingly "secure" and that Microsoft's drumbeating that the tool has enhanced security features seem to be true.



Description of type: Netscape Hypertext Document

Content Type (MIME): text/html

Default Extension for Content Type: .html

Actions:
Edit
Edit with Dreamweaver
open
print
PrintTo

☐ Enable Quick View ☑ Confirm open after download
☐ Always show extension ☐ Browse in same window

Changing your default HTML editor

By Jerry Liao

POWERTIPS

WANT to change your default HTML editor? Here's how:

1. Open Windows Explorer.
2. Go to "View" then "Folder Options."
3. Click on "File Types."
4. Under "Registered file types," select "Netscape Hypertext Document."
5. Click on the "Edit" button.
6. From the "Edit file type," click "New."
7. Under "Action," type "&Edit".
8. Under "Application used to perform action," type the location of your desired editor or you can browse through your hard disk (e.g., Notepad).
9. Click "OK," "Close" then "Close" again.
10. Right-click the HTML file you wish to edit, and choose "Edit With Notepad."

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Man's nervous system wired to a computer

LONDON—A controversial British robotics scientist has had his nervous system wired up to a computer in an experiment he hopes will eventually give paralyzed people more control over their own bodies.

Kevin Warwick, professor of cybernetics at Reading University, southern England, has had minute sensors implanted into the main nerve in his left arm and hooked up to a radio transceiver which will send and receive messages from a computer.

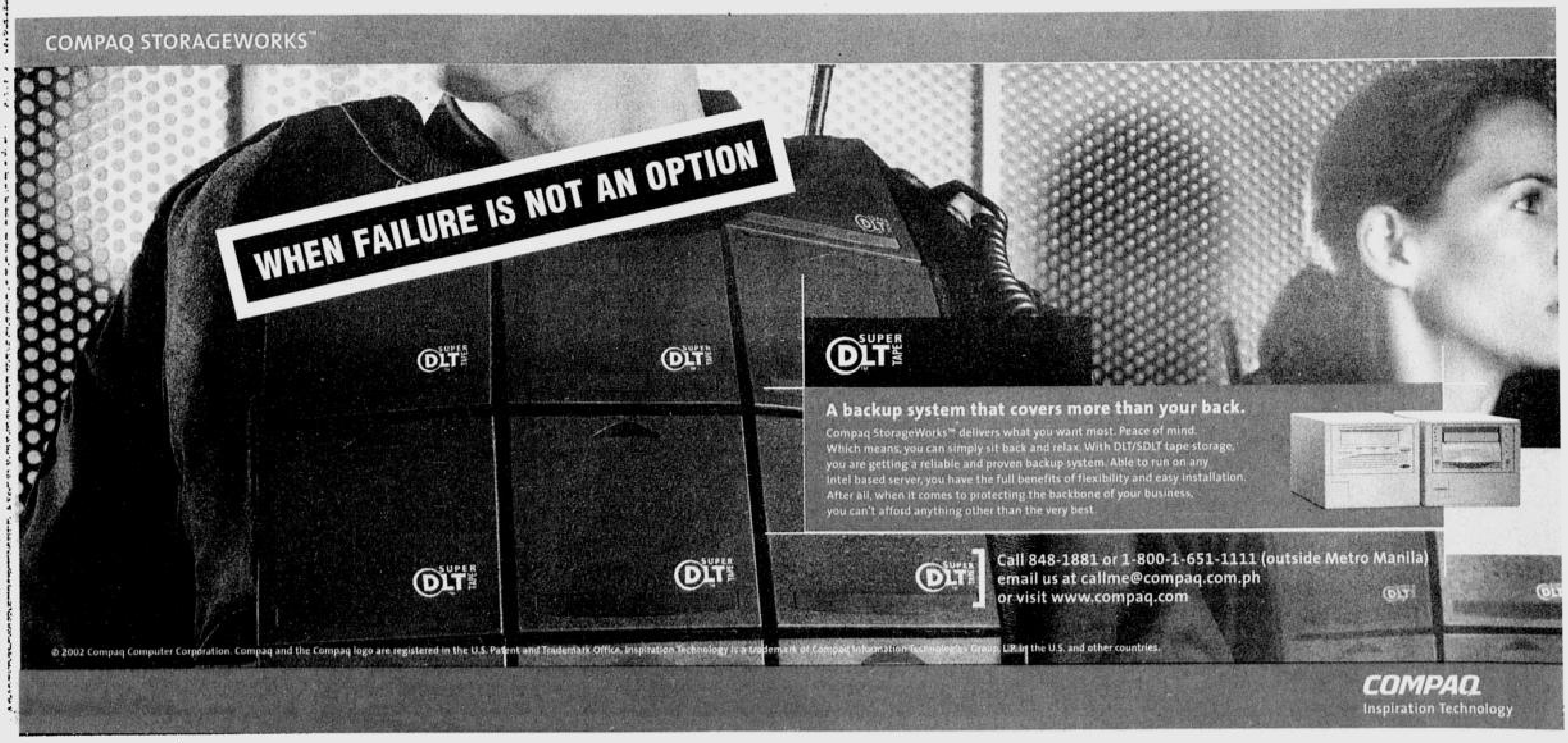
"We have a serious goal, a very medical goal of helping people with spinal injuries and the like where there is a break in the nervous system," Warwick said. "We will be sending signals from the nervous system to the computer by radio and back the other way."

He said the idea was to record on a computer the signals sent, for example, when a finger is moved and then to play them back in the hope of activating the finger by remote control. The professor said the aim of his experiment was to give people with spinal injuries at least some ability to move by remote control.

The next crucial stage would come next week when the radio/computer link will be established and the researchers would find what, if any, signals were being picked up.

"I am hopeful because I am already getting tingling sensations in my index finger," he said.

Warwick shocked the scientific world in 1998 by having a silicon chip transponder implanted in his left arm. *Reuters*



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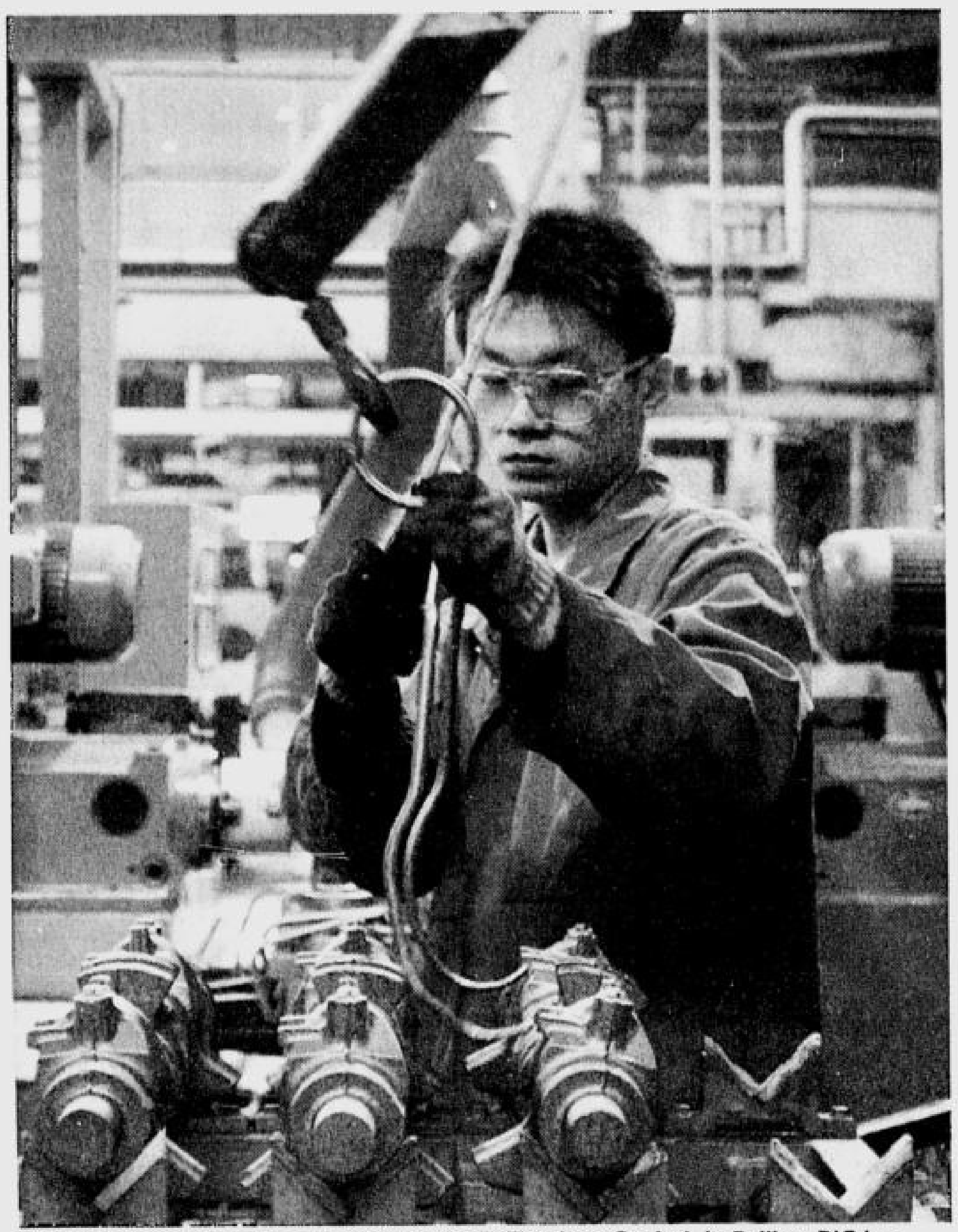


A CHINESE worker moves car parts at the Beijing Jeep Co. Ltd. in Beijing. BJC is a joint venture between a local Chinese company and US-German DaimlerChrysler AG with an annual output of 85,000 cars and 60,000 engines. Foreign companies go into joint ventures in the hope of tapping the vast Chinese market. AP

Philip Morris told to pay $150M in low-tar lawsuit

PORTLAND, Oregon—A jury ordered Philip Morris to pay $150 million in punitive damages on Friday in a lawsuit that contended low-tar cigarettes were as dangerous as regular ones.

The jury found that Philip Morris falsely represented that low-tar cigarettes were healthier, the first verdict in the nation to make that finding. The tobacco company said it would appeal.

The jury also awarded $168,000 in compensatory damages to the estate of Michele Schwarz of Salem, who died of lung cancer at age 53 in 1999 after smoking low-tar Merit cigarettes.

Schwarz had switched from a regular filtered cigarette because she believed the low-tar version would be better for her health, said the attorney for her estate, Lawrence Wobbrock.

Wobbrock contended in court that Philip'Morris marketed the cigarettes as having fewer health risks.

But James Dumas, one of the company's lawyers, said Philip Morris did not market Merits as healthier than regular filtered cigarettes. He said the company advertised them as milder, or feeling less harsh.

Wobbrock said smokers were getting the same amount of tar by taking more puffs on their cigarettes and smoking them closer to the butt.

But Dumas said it was not the company's fault that smokers figured out how to get around the low-tar design.

Dumas also said Schwarz, who worked for many years in the medical office of her physician husband, was well aware of the dangers of cigarette smoke.

Lawyer John Philips contended jurors were given "erroneous instructions" by the judge but would not elaborate. He also said that when plaintiffs highlighted portions of documents on an overhead projector, it amounted to "a guided tour through the documents." *AP*

Canada calls US lumber duty 'obscene'

OTTAWA—Canadian International Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew has labeled a 29-percent duty imposed on Friday by the US Commerce Department on softwood lumber imports from Canada "obscene."

Canadian lumber unions and communities, meanwhile, urged Ottawa to give Washington a wake-up call, but senior officials appeared unwilling to heed their calls.

After US-Canadian negotiations broke down late Thursday, the United States Commerce Department said Friday that it would impose a 29-percent duty on Canadian timber in a dispute over dumping.

The final figure is only slightly modified from the provisional rate of 32 percent announced last year for many softwood lumber products.

"After all the efforts we have made in the last few months to really address the substance of the American allegations about the softwood lumber issue, I have to tell you that I honestly find the final determination of 29 percent obscene," Pettigrew told reporters here.

Washington claims—and Ottawa denies—that some Canadian provinces unfairly subsidize softwood production.

"I am sorry that the American administration did not find the nerve to confront its protectionist softwood lumber producers. I am even sorry for American producers because in the long run it will only help them become even less productive," the minister said.

Pettigrew avoided directly answering calls from opposition MPs to assist Canadian communities hard-hit by the lumber crisis, triggered by the imposition of US duties last year following the end of a five-year US-Canadian pact on Canadian lumber exports.

He reaffirmed that Ottawa would be taking its fight against the US duties, which the US International Trade Commission would rule in May if it is allowed to stand before a North American Free Trade Agreement panel as well as the World Trade Organization.

"I am fully confident in our Nafta and WTO challenges, and I am taking this action today to best advance the interests of our industry. We have won before. We will win again," Pettigrew said in a statement. *AFP*

South Korean workers vow to defy March 25 ultimatum

SEOUL—Thousands of South Korean power workers vowed Saturday to stay on strike, defying a government and company ultimatum that they return to work by early next week or lose their jobs.

More than 5,000 workers at state-run electricity companies are in their fourth week of a strike to protest a privatization plan.

Prime Minister Lee Han-Dong on Saturday reaffirmed the ultimatum issued three days ago that unless strikers returned to their jobs, they would be sacked.

"The government will dismiss all those failing to get back to work by 9 a.m. on March 25, no matter how large the number is," Lee warned.

But the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), the country's second biggest umbrella labor union that has led the power industry strike, threatened to launch a general strike if any jobs were lost.

"The strike would go beyond the deadline without settling issues," Kim Chul-Woo, a KCTU public relations official, told AFP.

"If they fire workers en masse, the government will face the worst-ever challenge from the unions," he added.

He said around 95 percent of the 5,300 power union members "still remain united" over the strike which began on Feb. 25.

There has been no sign of moves to resume talks to end the industrial action. The government is sticking to the privatization plan.

Despite the prolonged strike, the country's electricity supply has not been disrupted due to a supply of substitute or non-union workers and much-automated systems.

The power firms said they also began training 200 military troops for possible use at facilities.

Management at the firms said they had already fired 197 unionists while warning another 3,945 workers could be fired. *AFP*

Nissan Motor's Renault stake seen falling below 15%

TOKYO—Japanese automaker Nissan Motor Co.'s plan to take a 15-percent equity share in its French partner, Renault SA, may fall short due to the recent rise in Renault shares and the decline in the value of the yen, a news report said Saturday.

In October, the two firms announced a cross-shareholding deal to bolster their alliance.

Renault paid earlier this month 215.9 billion yen (1.87 billion euros, $1.61 billion) to boost its stake in Nissan to 44.4 percent from 36.8 percent.

"Nissan, in exchange, planned to acquire a 15-percent interest in Renault in the middle of the year for about 150 billion yen," the Nihon Keizai Shimbun said.

"But it is rethinking the size of the stake because Renault's share price has risen 50 percent and the yen has depreciated, making the payment much larger than initially calculated."

Renault plans to issue new shares to Nissan for 50.39 euros per share, the newspaper said, adding Renault shares were trading at around 33 euros per share in October.

"For Nissan to acquire a 15-percent stake, it will have to pay more than 240 billion yen. Therefore, Nissan may lower its planned acquisition of the Renault stake to a little over 10 percent," the newspaper said. *AFP*

Hong Kong set to levy new airport security charge

HONG KONG—Air passengers departing from Hong Kong will be required to pay an extra HK$13 (US$1.67) to cover the cost of added security measures, officials said.

The surcharge will come into effect on May 1 and generate an extra HK$208 million to be spent on improved hardware to combat the perceived rise in terrorist threat since the Sept. 11 US terrorist attacks, the South China Morning Post reported Saturday.

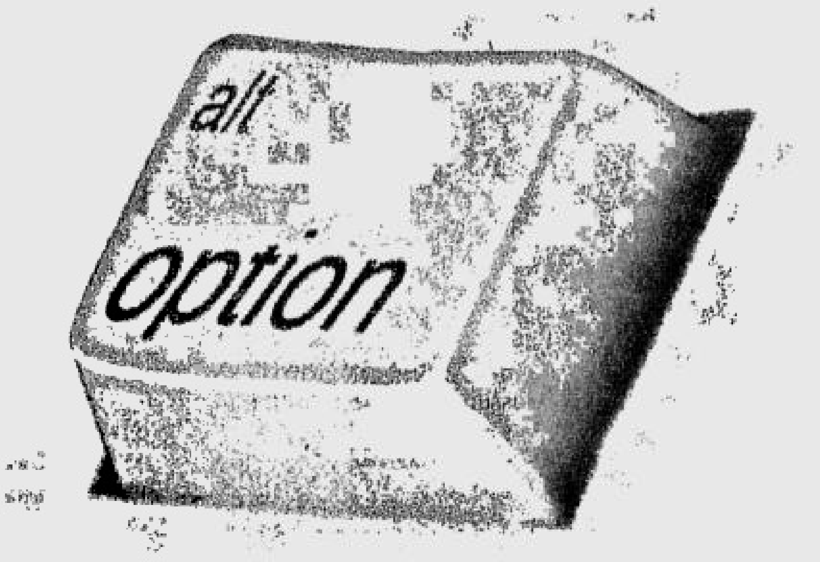
Airport Authority chief executive officer David Pang said: "Since it (airport security) is so important, we must have a stable income source to provide a solid service."

Passengers currently departing from the territory's Chek Lap Kok airport pay a HK$20 "security fee" to airlines when they buy tickets. Seven dollars goes on baggage handling while HK$13 is used for general security.

The authority has asked the airlines to collect the extra charge on its behalf.

The extra money is to be spent on upgrading metal and explosive detectors, x-ray equipment and baggages systems.

The Board of Airline Representatives is to meet the Airport Authority next week to discuss the details. *AFP*



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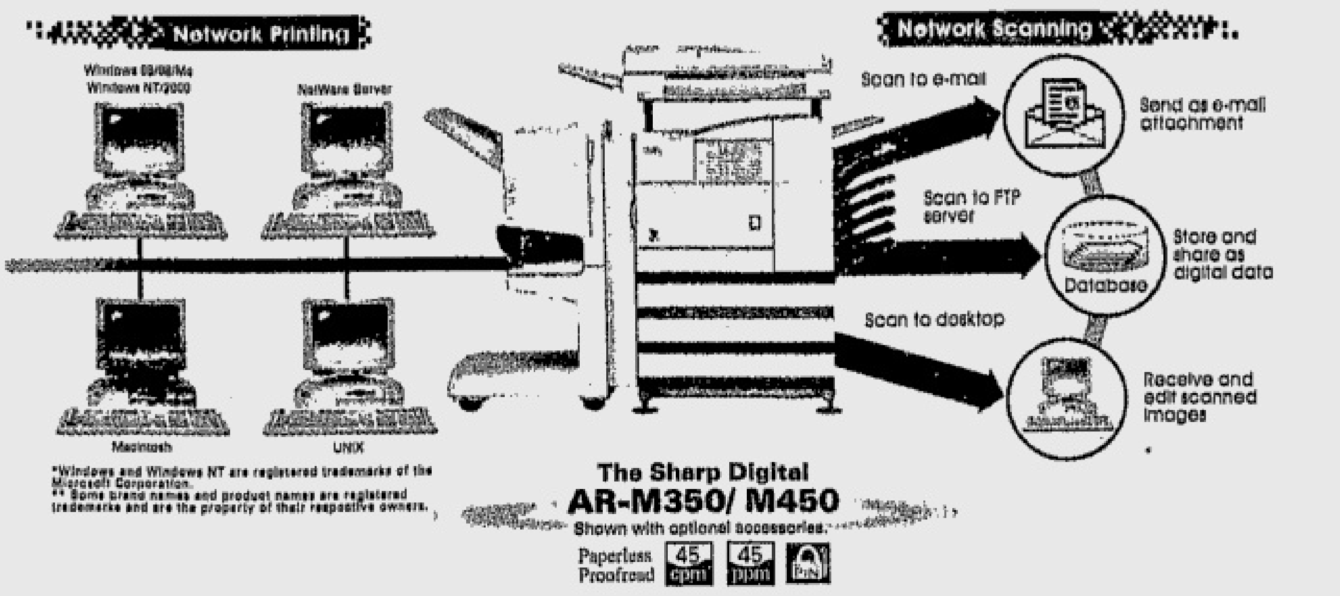

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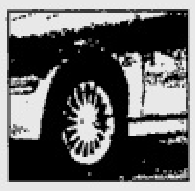

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Aussie gears up to help adopted land

By Doris C. Dumlao

AUSTRALIAN economist Thomas Crouch, recently appointed as the new Asian Development Bank country director for the Philippine country office, is no stranger to the Philippines.

Based mainly in Manila during the last 19 years since he joined the Manila-based ADB, Crouch said he was a first-hand witness to key political developments in the country. He saw the ouster of strongman Ferdinand Marcos and the many coup d' etat attempts against the administration of then President Corazon Aquino.

He still remembers the action right next door to his Makati residence during the siege of Makati by renegade military soldiers after the Edsa Revolution that forced him to temporarily evacuate his family to Alabang.

He has gotten used to living in the country and cemented his ties after marrying a Filipina hotelier-turned-entrepreneur.

Tall and slim, Crouch is a long distance runner, and has joined some marathon fund-raisers such as those devoted to Pasig River rehabilitation. He prefers running in the outdoors, though, and abhors using the treadmill.

With his new responsibilities, however, Crouch is likely to find less time for long-distance running.

As the new head of the Philippine country office which was opened by the ADB two years ago to focus on improving the country's poor loan disbursement ratio, Crouch's mandate is to oversee local operations and support country strategy and programming, loan processing and administration.

The ADB considers the RP office important as it is one of the biggest donors to the country's development program.

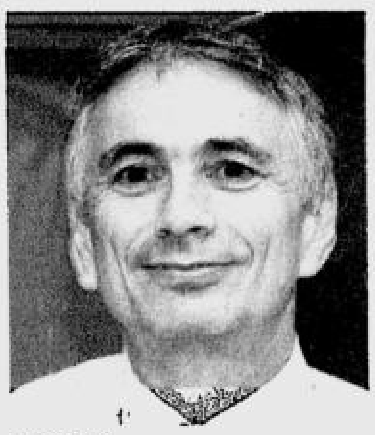
He will be working more closely with the government, civil society, private sector and other donors, a job that he is delighted to perform.

"I am married to a Filipina and my children are all growing up in the Philippines. For these reasons alone I have strong ties to the country and am committed to contributing whatever I can," Crouch said in his first luncheon meeting with the local media.

Crouch holds a degree in Economics and a post graduate diploma in Education from the University of Western Australia. Prior to joining ADB, he taught at several universities in Australia and worked as an economist in Papua New Guinea.

On his goals as the new country director, Crouch noted that lofty goal of poverty reduction was the

AUSSIE/ C6



CROUCH

OANDASAN

Kodak Asia's HR chief is a Pinoy

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SINGAPORE—The human resource director of Eastman Kodak Co.'s biggest business in Asia, the consumer imaging division, is a Filipino.

"Very Filipino and very Asian," says Cesar Oandasan of his management style that, without venturing at using any jargon, he sums up as "doing the right and honorable thing for the person and for the company."

MANAGEMENT STYLES

For this executive who's in his mid-40s, that actually means blending Filipino creativity and the Asian values of tactfulness and diplomacy to inspire the best in the division's more than 2,000 employees.

Out of the eight divisions in the world's leading photographic products company, which also supplies 90 percent of Hollywood's films, Oandasan's unit generates almost 60 percent of the company's total regional revenues.

His unit distributes films, cameras and other imaging products.

Because it's the cash cow in a sense, he admits that the pressure is "really tremendous for us to deliver."

Happy mix

Oandasan said the mix of and the high regard for these management values, mainly anchored on self-dignity and not losing face, really bring out the best results from the division's multi-cultural workforce.

"This being tactful and diplomatic essentially differentiates us from western culture, especially in the way we say things," he explains, glancing at his "favorite small, cheap painting" of a fish in hues of red, violet and gold.

It's the only piece of art in his white-walled, uncluttered office.

Oandasan, operating his unit from Singapore, strongly adheres to these Asian principles when he relates with employees from Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Indochina.

The job, he notes, is tough in the sense that he deals with differences in cultures.

He emphasizes that Eastman Kodak does not implement a "one-size-fits-all kind of (personnel management) policy."

"We look at different contexts. We have to understand where people are coming from. You cannot put everything in policies," he hastens to add.

In his case, Oandasan always tries to strike a good balance between the rights of the individual and the thrusts of the company.

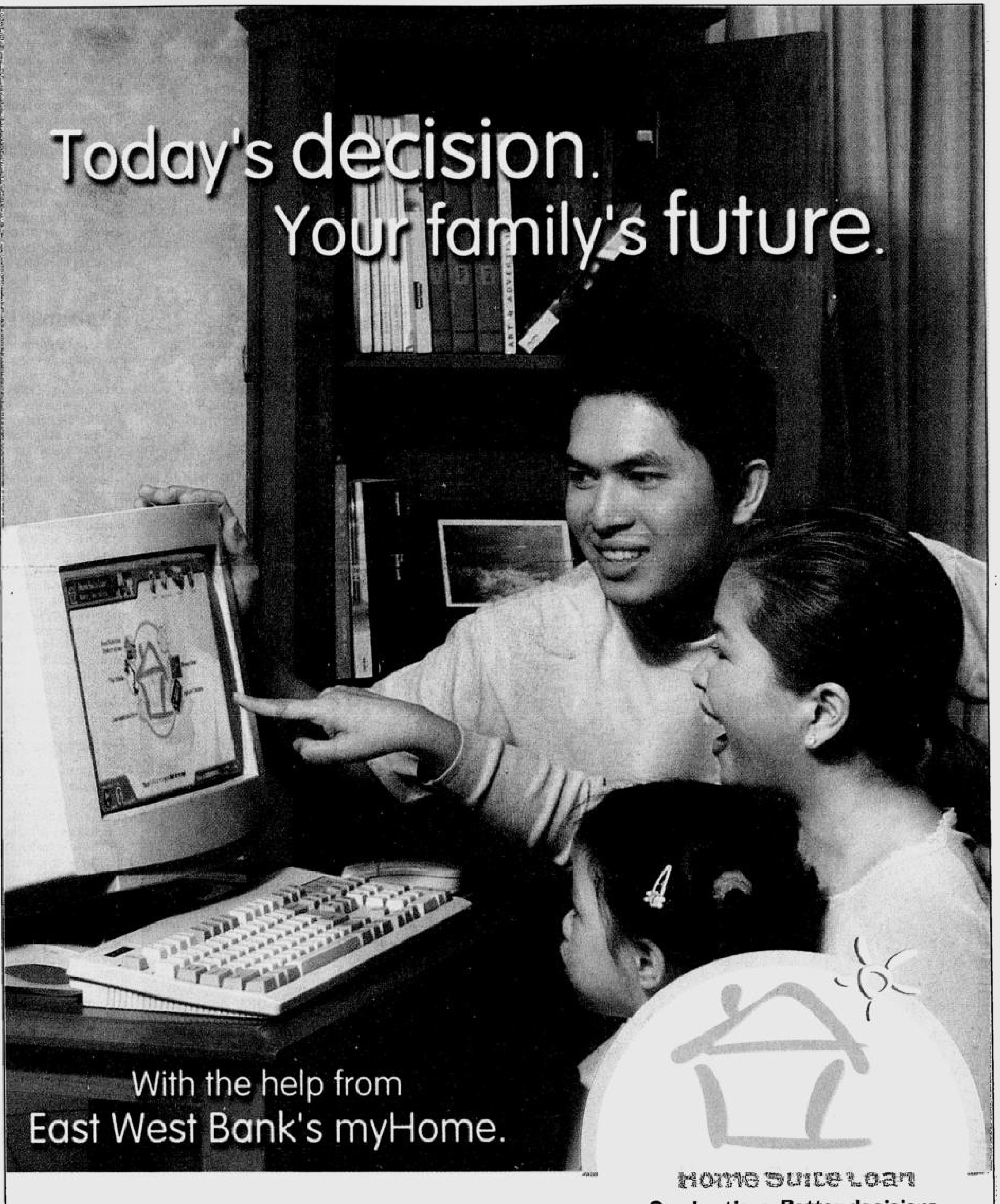
Compromise

"It's always a compromise and trying to arrive at a happy compromise between these two," he adds.

A deep sensitivity for the Asian culture plus Singapore's clear rules make him perform HR work well.

"It's not only the laws. It's not only the way they apply laws. It's also the way they lived it.

HR/ C4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Consumer goods distribution pattern

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Augusto L. de leon

THE PATTERNS of consumer goods distribution in the Philippines are now perceptibly changing in response to globalization policies and technology. To maintain competitiveness in the market place, those selling consumer products have to make, as they have done in the past, quick adjustments in their distribution methods.

A review of the historical patterns can date back to the late '50s when most consumer goods were imported and importers/traders dominated the supply of consumer goods. L/C TR bank financing favored the importers who in turn had the capacity to extend credit to the distribution and retail network nationwide.

In less-developed provincial areas, the provincial trader/retailers served as the procurement arm of the traders who were based in major trading hubs of Manila (Divisoria) and major cities of the Visayas and Mindanao. Supply of consumer goods was a vehicle for procurement of agricultural products that were assembled for export and provided a supply of basic commodities in urban areas.

Examples of the reciprocal arrangements include the supply of canned goods to the farmers in Visayas and Mindanao during the planting and growing period, with the farmers paying back the traders, corn, palay or copra after harvest. In Bicol, the trader/retailer issued "scrips" or IOU notes to pay for goods delivered to them. The trader/retailer, in turn, received copra to liquidate the "vale" purchases of the farmers and delivered the goods to Manila. These scrips were liquidated in Divisoria by the buyers/exporters of copra.

When the government adopted the policy of "import substitution" and domestic manufacturing flourished with government protectionist policies, manufacturers realized that the traditional traders constricted their ability to sell the volumes of their manufacturing capacity. A new trend of distribution evolved. This was characterized by manufacturers undertaking the distribution of their products directly to the wholesalers and retailers both in the provincial and urban markets. Major manufacturing companies organized and managed their own distribution network of salesmen equipped with vehicles to deliver the goods up to the retailer level.

Major importer distributors moved up to become manufacturers of the goods they distributed while others made alliances with manufacturers for the distribution of the locally manufactured goods.

As sales volume increased and taxation policies allowed better cost structure for the distribution function, some manufacturers incorporated their distribution function as separate marketing companies accountable for profits. Some of these Marketing companies and importer/traders reinvented themselves as distribution companies for several brands of products.

Today, with globalization, technology and new changes in the distribution, cost structure, manufacturers are starting to dismantle their distribution companies and are once more starting to rely on independent distribution companies to reach out to the retailers.

In addition to the dominant delivery-and-credit activities they undertook in the past, the independent distribution companies have enlarged their logistical function to include warehousing and inventory control. In some instances, they also include participation in the marketing function of advertising and promotions. Independent distribution companies handle not only locally produced products but also a wide range of imported products. They deal with both local and foreign manufacturers and importers.

The role of the missionary route sales has also radically changed as retailers' buying patterns changed. Instead of awaiting the delivery of goods to the *sari-sari* store, the retailers proactively seek out a supply of the goods they sell from major supermarkets and warehouse wholesale outlets. Previously unheard of, a typical retail storeowner will now rent a jeep, make a trip to the city and buy goods that are to be retailed in their stores. Credit cards are now used by retailers to finance the goods they sell, taking advantage of the credit card billing period from date of purchase. With two credit cards, retailers can buy their goods, sell, then liquidate their credit cards when they fall due. Retailers who previously paid cash to the route salesman will now buy only if the delivery salesmen gives them credit.

The market of mega supermarkets and wholesale price club type of outlets has expanded beyond end consumers to include retail outlets. Independent local distributors are once more becoming viable businesses while manufacturers, to remain competitive, are gradually withdrawing from undertaking the sales distribution functions of their marketing directly. Instead, many are starting to concentrate in building brand and relying more on demand-pull instead of product-push in selling their product to consumers. *(This article reflects the personal views of the author who is a member and past governor of the Management Association of the Philippines and chair of De Leon Consulting. The MAP secretariat and the author may be reached via mapsec@globenet.com.ph)*

Boeing, Lufthansa offer in-flight Internet access

SEATTLE, Washington—Aerospace giant Boeing said the first customer for its in-flight broadband service, Connexion, would take the wraps off its first fully Internet-enabled airplane on Thursday.

The German carrier Lufthansa will roll out the 747, retrofitted with antennas and a host of onboard electronics.

The two companies will begin a pilot test in April and hope to launch a commercial service offering passengers Internet access and a choice of television programming in December.

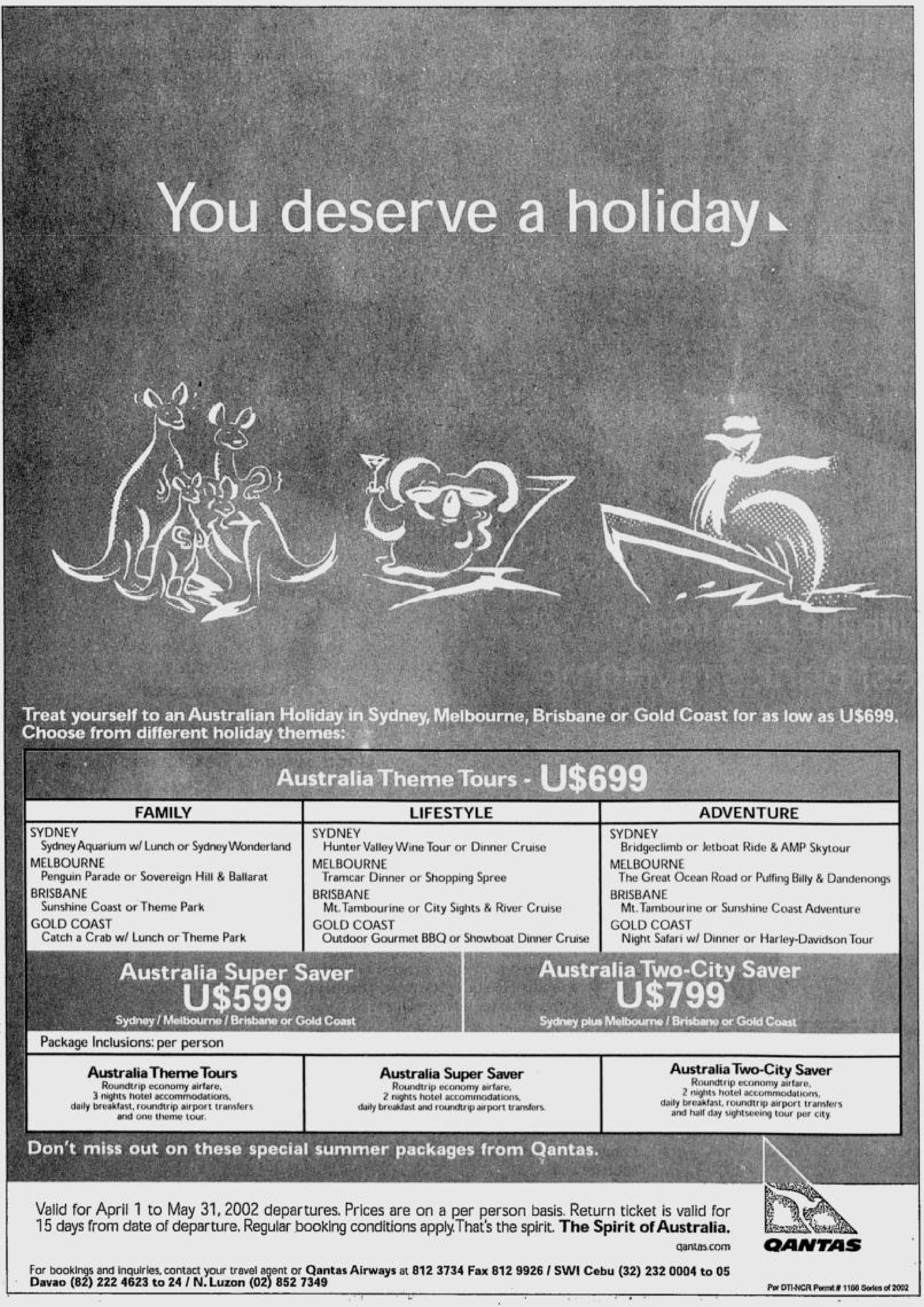
The service will initially be targeted at business clients on long-distance flights who will be required to pay between $15 to $20 to check their email, browse the Web, or make their own choice of television program.

"Corporate accounts are very attractive markets," said Scott Carson, president of Boeing's Connexion business unit, who said he was confident of signing up two US carriers for the service by the end of the year.

The commercial launch of Connexion, which was first devised in 1995 and is already being marketed to the private corporate jet market, has been pushed back because of the impact of Sept. 11 on the airline industry.

It was initially scheduled to be up and running by now, but a full commercial launch is now slated for the first quarter of 2004, Carson said.

By the end of the decade, Boeing predicts the service will have revenues of between $3 billion to $5 billion. **AFP**



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Per DTI-NCR Permit # 1166 Series of 2002

MOVEMENTS

Aquino named to AIM board

AQUINO

THE ASIAN Institute of Management (AIM) announced today that former President Corazon C. Aquino will join the AIM board of governors. She will be the first former head of state and woman to be a governor of AIM—an institute that is committed to the integration and growth of Asian societies by developing professional, entrepreneurial and socially responsible leaders and managers.

The AIM board of governors, a predominantly Asian group of distinguished business leaders from 16 countries including the Philippines, will hold their annual meeting on Friday, March 8, together with the board of trustees.

GMA Marketing appoints new COO

THE BOARD of directors of GMA Marketing and Productions Inc. in a meeting on March 15, 2002, unanimously elected Manuel P. Quiogue as the new president/COO and member of the board of the company.

"Meckoy," as he is known in the industry, is an AB Economics graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University, and most recently the CEO of a group of niche companies of ABS-CBN, most notably Channel 23. He has had the opportunity to work in all three sectors of our industry, having occupied key marketing positions in leading client companies (Unilever, Levi Strauss and Coca-Cola, formerly president of Pana (1984), chairman of the Adboard (1985), president of J. Walter Thompson (1991-1994), and former head of sales and marketing of ABS-CBN.

Among those present were directors Felipe Gozon and Joel Jimenez representing the Jimenez family in the board. They jointly clarified that the situation involving Roberto Barreiro is not an issue between the two families.

AccraLaw names new associates

VICTOR P. Lazatin, managing partner of Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz Law Offices (AccraLaw) recently announced the promotion of seven lawyers to the rank of senior associates, namely: Marlou B. Ubano; Clarence Darrow C. Valdecantos; Andre B. Navato, Jr.; Rafael Vicente P. Umali; Josue Sim M. Zuniega; Arnold M. Corporal; Jose Martin R. Tensuan.

"AccraLaw values its people as its primary strength," says Lazatin, "and enhances its human talents through a continuing mix of both structured and informal learning programs. It has defined a merit-based career path for every lawyer."

Equitable PCIBank promotes officers

VIVAS

EQUITABLE PCI Bank announces the promotion of Richard Benedict S. So to first vice president. So is at the helm of Express Padala Center, the bank's remittance division. He handles the bank's remittance operations, overseeing the bank's overseas remittance offices and managing the bank's relationship with remittance correspondents. He joined the bank in 1995 as AVP and head of the remittance center.

Vice president Rosola A. Vivas was personal trust and agencies department head of trust banking and has recently moved to the retail banking group. She joined the bank in 1997 as AVP and head of the business development department of trust banking group.

Melissa A. Alcantara is compensation and research department head of the bank's human resources. She joined the bank in 1980 as staff assistant of human resources' programs and policies division. Christine T. Chow oversees the bank's Roosevelt Pitimini Branch as branch head. A certified public accountant (14th place), she joined the bank in 1987 as new accounts clerk of Juan Luna Binondo Branch. Christine is a BSC Accounting graduate of De La Salle University.

Promotions at Ace Saatchi & Saatchi

ACE Saatchi & Saatchi recently announced the appointment of executive creative director Cesar Victor ("Cid") P. Reyes as chief creative officer, and the promotion of Maria Leonor ("Merlee") Jayme to the position of executive creative director of the agency.

Both Reyes and Jayme are multi-awarded and highly respected in the advertising industry. The many memorable and business-building campaigns that they have developed for various clients have helped Ace Saatchi & Saatchi secure its niche as the country's hothouse for world-changing ideas.

Citibank appoints new branch head

CHENG

CITIBANK, N.A. recently announced the appointment of Patrick Cheng as head for branch banking for its global consumer banking operations.

Patrick will be responsible for managing the customer deposits and investments business with emphasis on wealth management. He will oversee the operations of Citibank's six branches in the Philippines located in Makati, Greenhills, Alabang, Binondo, Libis-Quezon City and Cebu City.

Patrick joined the bank in 1990 as a management associate and has had various postings in treasury, compliance and marketing. Prior to his new assignment, he served as treasurer for global consumer banking, and introduced a number of breakthrough deposit and investment products for Citibank.

Three new officers at GMA News

GMA Network's award-winning News and Public Affairs Department is fortified with the appointment of three accomplished new officers to lead its operations.

Appointed as production unit manager for news was Sheila Paras while Nessa Valdellon and Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil were named production unit managers for public affairs.

Paras is a seasoned producer of various award-winning GMA News and Public Affairs programs having served as associate producer for I-Witness and GMA Network News, as producer/writer for Saksi, and as executive producer of Extra Extra. She is currently the executive producer for the highly acclaimed evening newscast, Frontpage.

Ionics EMS has new president

IONICS EMS Inc., the principal subsidiary of publicly listed Ionics Inc., announced that Jan Doets has assumed his post as president and chief operating officer (COO) of the company effective March 1, 2002. Ionics Inc. is the country's leading electronics manufacturing services provider.

Doets was formerly vice president of Philips' Optical Storage and Industrial plant in Belgium. He has more than 10 years of extensive experience in R&D, logistics, outsourcing, management development and manufacturing, including large-scale projects in Japan, Singapore, Belgium, Germany and Austria. Before his last assignment, he served as project and plant manager in audio-video production facilities of the global electronics corporation in Belgium, Singapore and Austria.

Ionics chair and CEO Lawrence Qua expressed confidence that the new president, with his involvement in Philips' turnkey projects with various EMS companies, will be able to take the company to the next level of technological competency and business focus. Doets took over the position of COO from Remedios de Jesus who retired from the company effective Feb. 28.

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Bank exec expresses confidence in RP business

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura warmly receives expressions of confidence in Philippine business growth by Standard Chartered Plc. Group executive Kai Nargolwala (second from right) joined by SCB Philippine executives Mike Aguilar (left), head-global markets, and Dev Sarker (right), head of C&I

STANDARD Chartered Bank Plc. Group executive director Kai Nargolwala expressed optimism for the Philippines' continued growth based on sound reforms being instituted by the government.

Nargolwala's optimism was expressed during a recent visit to Manila where he met with various government officials and business leaders that included Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

His first visit to Manila was last year after Standard Chartered was upgraded into a universal bank by the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the BSP.

Nargolwala recognized the impressive financial performance of SCB Philippines last year. Taking note of the tough economic situation of the Philippine market, Nargolwala emphasized that the bank's profitability last year was a significant feat after the Asian crisis.

In his meeting with Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, Nargolwala was engaged in assessing the country's potentials for strengthened investor confidence.

LIGHT moment with singer Kuh Ledesma, SM Prime Holdings EVP and CFO Jose Sio, SCB Group executive director Kai Nargolwala

Likewise, he assured bank clients that Standard Chartered Group remained fully committed to the Philippine market.

This commitment comes at the heels of a string of recognition and citations for Standard Chartered's outstanding performance. These include: Best Trade Finance House by the Asset Asian Awards 2002; Best Custodian Bank by the Global Custodian and Global Investors Magazine 2001; Best Bank in Foreign Exchange in Asia-Pacific in Emerging Asian Currencies as well as in Emerging Middle Eastern/African Currencies; top ratings from Greenwich International Survey as Cash Management Provider and Corporate Banking. Standard Chartered Bank Philippines is also ISO 9001:2000 Certified for Wholesale Bank Service Delivery.

Standard Chartered is the first foreign commercial bank in the country and is part of the international network composed of 500 offices and branches in 50 countries with 30,000 employees.

BIG SMILES from Chito Gonzales (center), chief financial officer of Globe Telecommunication, joined by SCB executives Glenn Cuevo (left) and Gerry Lopez

VOTE of confidence from Peter Lawrence (left) chief financial officer of Smart Communications and Arturo Lopez (right), chief financial officer of Asian Terminals Inc. SCB C&I executive Chu Bautista joins them.

Kodak Asia's HR chief is a Pinoy

From page C1

That's why they're trying to stir this creativity thing, like they're so put up in boxes. When it's not written: no, cannot be. The rules are very strict but the rules are clear," he says of how things are done in the state city where he has lived with his wife Angelita and their two sons since 1997.

To further distinguish Singapore from other countries, Oandasan reads a quote from Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew: "In Hong Kong, what is not expressly forbidden is permitted. In Singapore, what is not expressly permitted is forbidden."

In this setting, "you know exactly what to do and the consequences are almost predictable," Oandasan says.

But what differentiates him and makes him effective is the Filipino's high sense of creativity.

"If you're able to combine this clarity of laws with positive creativity and you know what you can do here, you can come out with more innovative policies," he says.

Oandasan, who joined Eastman Kodak in February 2000 and is the company's first Filipino HR manager based in Singapore, plans to retire after five years.

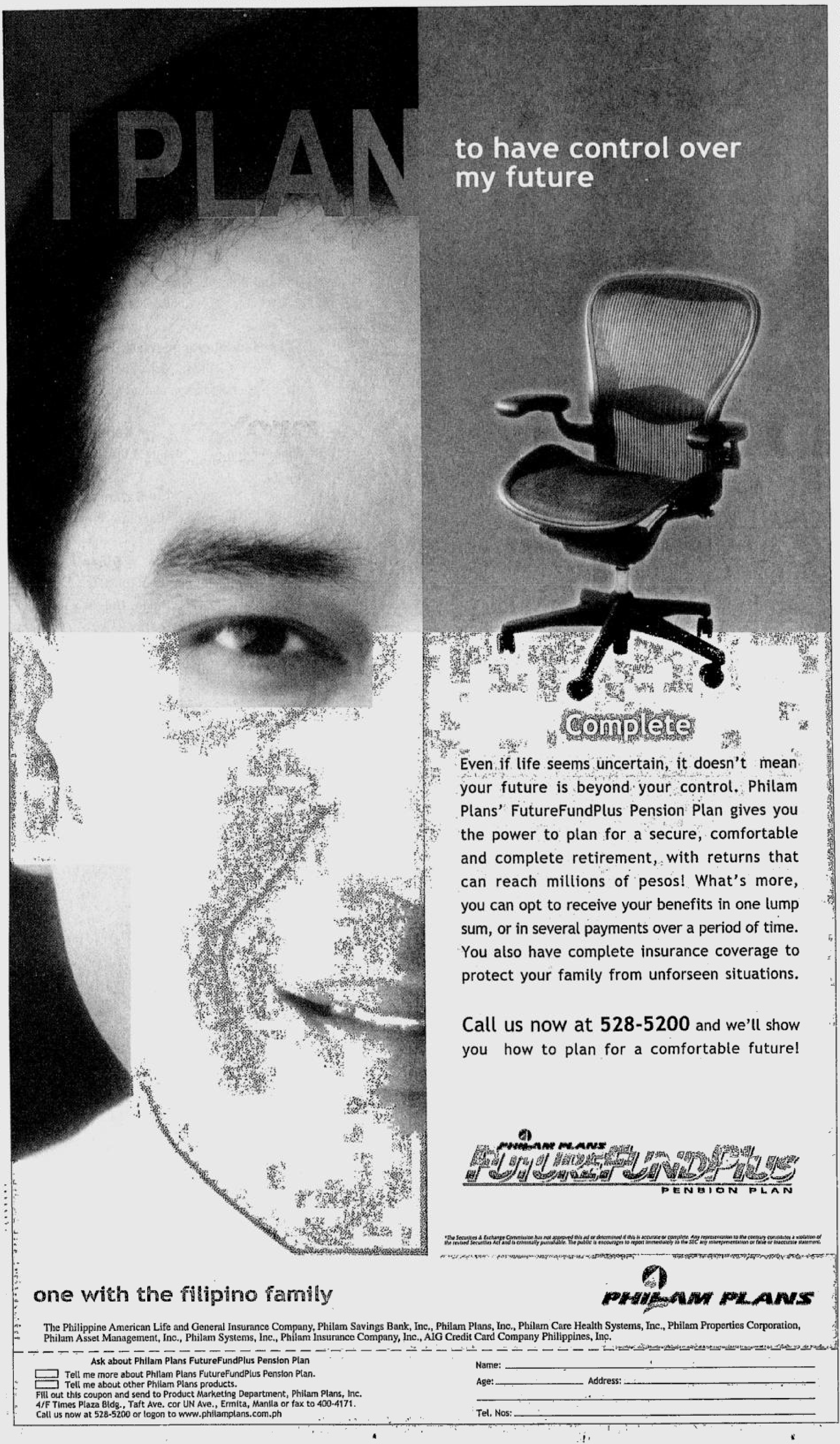
And this early, he has concrete targets: Return to the Philippines, teach in graduate school and share regional and global HR practices he has been exposed to.

There's a load of experience behind him to share back home.

Although an industrial engineer graduate from the University of the Philippines, everything in Oandasan's career had been in finance and human resource management at Del Monte Philippines, PCI Bank, Citibank, Coca-Cola, and finally, Eastman Kodak.

To teach, according to this manager who grew up in Magsingal, Ilocos Sur, is "what I want to do."

"I think that's where I excel most and that's where I can contribute more to society. At the end of the day, I am still Filipino," he says.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Filipinos are the least poor in the US

By Dennis M. Arroyo

WELCO
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PINOY culture keeps Filipino-Americans out of poverty. Across the Pacific it makes for valuable social capital.

So argues an article entitled "Filipinos are Skirting the Poverty Trap." It was published in the Feb. 27, 2002 issue of the San Francisco Examiner.

Bonds that boost

I have to lay out some definitions first. Capital is what makes people more productive in making a living. A computer is a kind of physical capital because it is a tool for production. The money used to buy the computer is financial capital. The knowledge in your brain is human capital.

Then there is social capital. This refers to the bonds in society that foster more sharing and reciprocal giving. It's a combination of short-term altruism and long-term self-interest. Person A helps Person B in the vague and uncertain hope that eventually Person B will help him in the future.

To use the phrase of Albert Hirschman, it comes down to "moral resources."

Poverty rate shockingly low

The Examiner article mentioned was by Adrienne Sanders. She noted that the US census took income readings for all and broke them down into ethnic groups. Sanders wrote, "In the United States, Filipinos have a household poverty rate that is so shockingly low, it begs the question: what are they doing right?"

The census found that only 4 percent of Filipino families in the United States were poor in 1990. The ratio even fell to one percent in 2000. This did not mean that they were very wealthy. Rather, only a few Filipinos fell below the poverty line.

"Filipinos have almost negligible poverty. It's lower than every other group, including college-educated Jews," said USC Professor Dowell Myers who studied the census data. Myers had created a poverty index using federal guidelines.

No matter where they were found in the social ladder, Filipino-Americans tended to climb up and begin owning land and houses. They moved away into richer communities, according to the article.

High human and social capital

Why the amazing low rates? High levels of education and facility with English mattered. But Sanders cited some safety nets found in Filipino culture: people would form close ties and help each other.

Take the case of Michael Guingona, the mayor of Daly City. Born in San Francisco, he grew up in a large extended family. Uncles, aunts and cousins helped each other find jobs when they landed in America.

Filipinos from the same areas in the Philippines would still stick together. They would see each other in the local Catholic Church and in ethnic organizations. Close family friends were addressed as *tito* or *lolo*. This happened all over the United States.

"I grew up thinking that everybody who was brown was my cousin," laughed the 40-year-old mayor.

"Although it often is crowded, everyone has shelter and food. And their culture dictates that no one goes hungry," wrote Sanders.

Plain hard work

Another factor was hard work. The author noted that Guingona's family members, like other Filipino families, each held multiple jobs. So the total income was more than enough to pull the household above the poverty line.

"Filipino households often show a trend toward multiple breadwinners, with more than one family living under the same roof. The result is a reduction of household poverty in dollar terms," says the writer from the San Francisco Examiner.

To return to the concept of social capital, the economist Kenneth Arrow had said, "It can be plausibly argued that much of the economic backwardness in the world can be explained by the lack of mutual confidence."

A book by Robert Putnam was emphatic about the value of social capital. Putnam wrote: "For political stability, for government effectiveness, and even for economic progress, social capital may be even more important than physical capital."

Risk appetite fuels Indian stock futures boom

BOMBAY—Risk-loving Indian investors have flocked to individual stock futures since their launch four months ago, creating the second largest market of its kind in the world as they seek a replacement for a banned speculative play.

Equity futures contracts average turnover of nearly 30,000 a day at the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the biggest of India's 23 bourses—behind Spain's daily average of 65,000 contracts but way ahead of third-ranked London's average 9,800.

That doesn't surprise market watchers. Speculators ruled the roost in India's stock exchanges until the popular century old carry-forward trading facility called *"badla"* was banned last year after it was blamed for many defaults and stocks crashes.

Single stock futures represent a contractual agreement to buy or sell shares of a company at a set date in the future at a given price. It offers relatively larger potential gains, and a sharper downside, compared to other derivative products.

"The popularity of stock futures reflects the risk appetite of Indian investors," says John Band, chief executive of Bombay-based brokerage ASK Raymond James.

"There is a huge speculative element in the Indian market which has flocked to stock futures because it is more like the banned *badla,*" he says.

Before it was scrapped, the *badla* accounted for 90 percent of the total business at local bourses.

Stock futures now account for 9 billion rupees ($184.7 million) out of the 13.5 billion daily in the derivatives segment at the NSE, while turnover in the cash section averages 25.5 billion rupees.

Derivatives play

Only 12 countries, including Britain, Sweden, Hong Kong and Australia, offer single stock futures. India also has stock options and index-linked futures and options, but they are not as popular.

Many market punters consider stock options as safer products where investors' potential losses can be locked in on the first day of the contract—limited to the option premium paid. In stock futures, gains or losses can add up through the life of the contract.

"The key to stock futures' success is its resemblance to *badla,*" said Ketan Gandhi, a director at Bombay-based D T Gandhi Securities.

Stock futures require an investor to pay a fraction of the total value of the trade as an initial margin. The popular *badla* had given speculators the opportunity to build positions much larger than they could otherwise afford.

Brokers club

Almost 80 percent of the total stock futures volume is proprietary trading, or by brokers on their account, according to exchange officials.

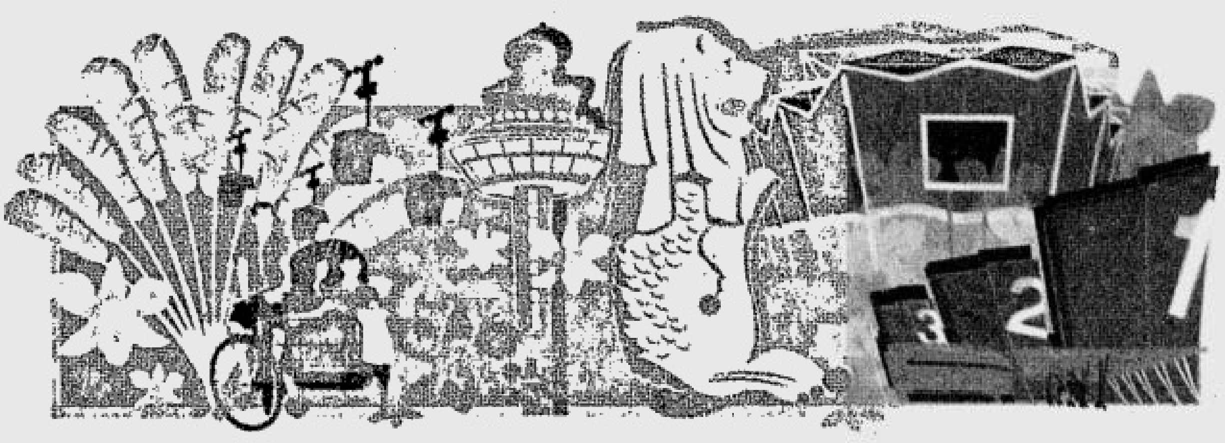
The bulk of the remainder comes from retail investors.

"Institutional players are generally more active in index-based derivatives and with the recent easing of norms, foreign funds presence should increase," said Sanjiv Mehta, the chief executive of the derivatives segment at the Bombay Stock Exchange, Asia's oldest bourse.

"I don't think the stock futures will go out of favor though institutional players could increase the overall size of the market," Band said.

Currently, derivatives volume is about 30-35 percent of the total cash market, in contrast to developed markets where the derivatives turnover is in multiples of the cash market.

Reuters



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In man vs machine battle, futures traders buy some time

CHICAGO—Not long ago, industry experts predicted that the waving, shouting, colorfully dressed traders in the Chicago exchange pits would soon go the way of the dinosaur, replaced by the silence of electronic trade.

But a funny thing happened on the way to extinction—trading volume in the pits actually went up last year.

On the surface, it seems that happy days are here again in Chicago. Volume on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, the largest US futures market, surged 78 percent last year.

At the venerable Chicago Board of Trade, the world's oldest futures exchange, volume jumped 11.5 percent in 2001 due to more active financial futures and options contracts.

Both exchanges showed profit last year as higher volume boosted income from trading fees. The exchanges managed their robust performances even though electronic trading accounted for just a fifth of the volume of both exchanges in 2001.

But look beyond the increased volume, and the situation in Chicago is more troubling. Electronic trading is growing rapidly internationally, and those who use the computerized markets like the low cost and efficiency they bring.

Change advocates continue to call for a faster pace of automation, although the strong performance of the last year has emboldened the traditional traders who call orders in the trading pits.

The conflict is leading to a battle for control at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange leadership because of worries over the pace of change.

"They (Chicago) don't want to change. The market was so good last year, they are thinking 'it's working again, so why should we do something new or dangerous for us?'" said Patrice Blanc, chair of trading firm Fimat USA Inc.

Electronic boom

While Chicago clings to traditional ways, the rest of the world had moved rapidly to electronic trade. Two powerhouse derivatives exchanges have emerged in Europe—the world's largest futures exchange, Eurex, and Euronext/LIFFE, a merger of stock and derivatives marts—both exclusively electronic.

Once preeminent, Chicago's share of world derivatives trade shrank to just 21 percent last year.

And new exchanges are springing up to take on Chicago as a derivatives hub. The most successful, the International Securities Exchange, last year cut into the stock options business of the Chicago Board Options Exchange. Another electronic exchange, BrokerTec, has set out to peal away Chicago volume in government bonds with limited success so far.

At least three other groups, including a consortium of LIFFE and stock exchange Nasdaq, electronic stock trading system Island Futures Exchange and the American Stock Exchange are lining up to take on Chicago later this year in single stock futures, the newest niche in US futures trade.

Frightened into change

A few years ago, the Chicago exchanges were so frightened by electronic trading that they took halting steps to reform. They reached outside their own ranks to hire new chief executives to run the exchanges more like public companies. The CME in 2000 hired James McNulty from the investment banking firm Warburg Dillon Read, and last year the CBOT hired David Vitale from Bank One Corp.

They took steps to "demutualize" or transform themselves from member-owned to publicly listed corporations. The CME could launch an initial public offering at any time, while the CBOT is not yet as far along in the process.

They have invested in electronic trading systems—Globex at the CME, and a/c/e, a venture with Eurex, for CBOT.

For a while the strategy seemed to offer the best of both worlds—prepare for an electronic world and keep open outcry trading going as long as possible. But in a strange irony, the trading boom last year has fueled a backlash.

"Now people say things are going pretty well, maybe we can slow down," CME chair Scott Gordon told Reuters. "We can't stop (innovating) because we had a good year."

Industry sources told Reuters that the CME old guard, led by former chairs Leo Melamed and Jack Sandner, are organizing an effort to oust Gordon and replace him with vice chair Terrence Duffy, who they believe is more in tune with the wishes of the traders in the pits.

The battle could play out around April 17, when Gordon is standing for reelection to the CME board.

Last stand in the pits

Reform-minded traders in Chicago and industry officials outside said another bout of infighting would be a setback for Chicago's efforts to transform itself.

"It is impossible for me to imagine five years from now any open outcry trading almost anywhere in the world," Ron Hersch, senior managing director of Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc, told the annual futures industry conference in Florida last week.

Some companies are starting to complain that Chicago's straddling the fence between the pits and computers is costing them money because they must keep parallel pit trading and electronic trading operations.

"Having to support these two venues is really killing us," Hersch said.

The dual systems mean that it is more expensive to trade on US markets than in Europe, Fimat's Blanc said.

To be sure, there are practical problems to sort out before Chicago trading could move exclusively to electronic systems. For example, traders said that the sophisticated spread strategies used in eurodollars are easier executed in the pits than on electronic screens.

But others said the pace of technology is so fast that before long even the eurodollar trading complexities could be sorted out on electronic systems. The CME is investing in software to do just that.

A few of the basic commodity markets such as metals in London and grains and livestock in Chicago may continue to trade in the pits for a long time, industry sources said.

"What we would like to see is the big financial contracts go all electronic," Fimat's Blanc said. *Reuters*

Aussie . . .

From page C1

tie that binds the development partnership between ADB and the Philippines.

He said he's a new kid on the block as far as country assistance strategy to the Philippines was concerned, but based on what he has so far observed, he said the country must hurdle four key economic challenges to win the war against poverty.

These are fiscal management, utilization of official development assistance, support to the private sector and good governance.

The ADB executive said that during the recently concluded consultative group meeting in Clark, Pampanga, the consensus was that improving fiscal management was the key to meeting development objectives.

"While progress was made in 2001, considerably more effort is needed, especially on the revenue side. The government needs to create greater fiscal space for new investment, operation and maintenance of existing assets, and high priority social expenditures," Crouch said.

He added that the country must improve the utilization of its loans.

Although significant progress has been made since a Philippine country office was established in 2000, he said the country still had one of the lowest loan disbursement ratios in the region.

While the average in the region was over 20 percent, the Philippines' disbursement ratio stood at 19 percent for combined project and program loans in 2001.

As low as it is, it already was a huge improvement from the 8 percent utilization level in 2000, when major infrastructure projects encountered right-of-way problems.

"ADB will work with stakeholders to improve utilization of its loans. Once a loan is approved, we find that too many projects in our portfolio are being implemented too slowly. This means that benefits are delayed and the financial costs increase. These are not good for poverty reduction," he said.

Thirdly, Crouch said the country must give more support to the private sector, saying that the private sector was the primary source of growth, employment and income-generating opportunities.

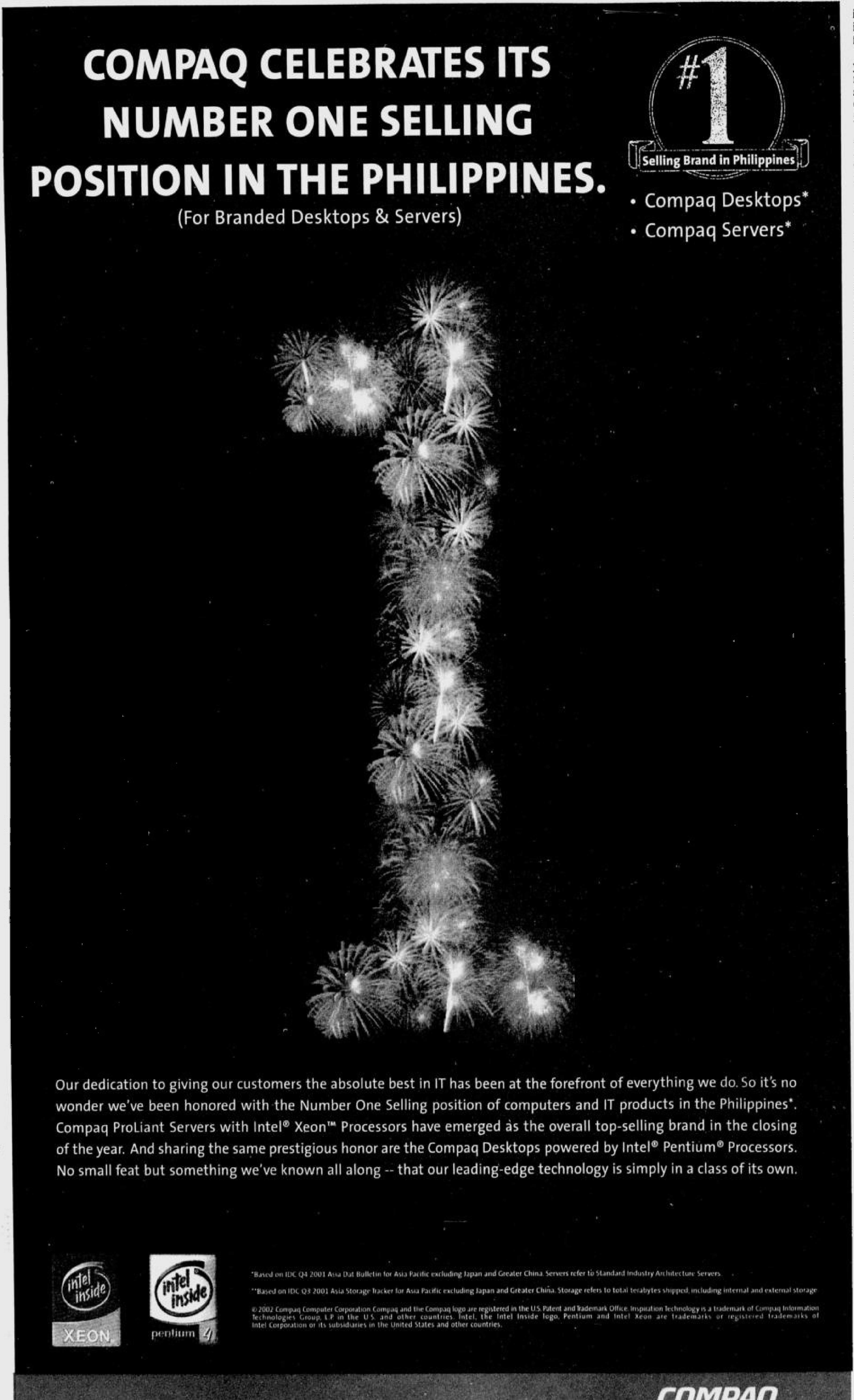
"ADB is fortunate to have public and private sector operations under the one roof. Through our public sector operations, we need to work to improve the incentive framework for the private sector," Crouch said.

Lastly, the new ADB envoy to Manila said the government now faces the challenge of implementing its comprehensive good governance agenda.

He said he was glad to see how clearly the Macapagal administration had acknowledged the governance constraints on development.

"The administration is not fooled by the argument that corruption is that oil that lubricates the economy. It is in fact the very reverse," Crouch said.

"Corrupt practices compromise growth and development. It is like running a race with a coconut tied to each leg—you will either not reach your goal, or reach it much later than your competitors," he stressed.



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*Based on IDC Q4 2001 Asia Dat Bulletin for Asia Pacific excluding Japan and Greater China. Servers refer to Standard Industry Architecture Servers.

**Based on IDC Q3 2001 Asia Storage Tracker for Asia Pacific excluding Japan and Greater China. Storage refers to total terabytes shipped, including internal and external storage

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COMPAQ
Inspiration Technology

Tired of savings? Try mutuals

From page C8

Then there is a balanced fund where the funds are distributed into treasury bills, commercial papers and equity funds. A new variant is a mutual fund invested inforeign exchange.

Legasto says an investor must assess his appetite or tolerance for risk before he invests in a mutual fund company.

If he is willing to go for a high risk but also high-return fund, then go for a pure equity fund. If he is risk averse, then it would be better to invest in a fixed-income trust fund. For those who have moderate risk appetite, then go for the balanced fund.

Legasto says a mutual fund investment is recommended for those who are too busy to track investments on their own, or do not have the financial expertise to follow the stock market or interest rate movements.

By going for a mutual fund, an investor's fund averaging P100,000 will be eligible for professional advice and management.

"I would say that there is actually no choice between investing in a mutual fund or leaving it in a savings account because the yield is higher," Legasto says.

The only possible drawback is that the government guarantees a savings deposit, while there is none for a trust fund. It is thus, important to look at the profile of the ones managing the account to make sure that the money would still be there at the end of the year.

Mutual fund companies are also measured for their performance against the benchmark which are the treasury bill rates and the performance of the stock market.

A mutual fund company should be able to give its investors at least one percent more than the prevailing 90-day treasury bill rate and at least perform as well as the Philippine composite index.

Another difference is that an individual can withdraw his savings account anytime without any penalties. Investments in a mutual fund, on the other hand, are typically locked in for about a year, although there are some that offer 90-day holding periods.

"If an individual does not really need the money immediately and he can afford to wait for at least a year, a mutual fund investment would be ideal," he says.

There are about 21 players in the mutual fund industry and about P14 billion are invested in these funds, mostly in fixed income funds.

The biggest players are BPI, which accounts for almost half of the market, followed by Sunlife Financial, Philam Fund and the Kabuhayan Fund.

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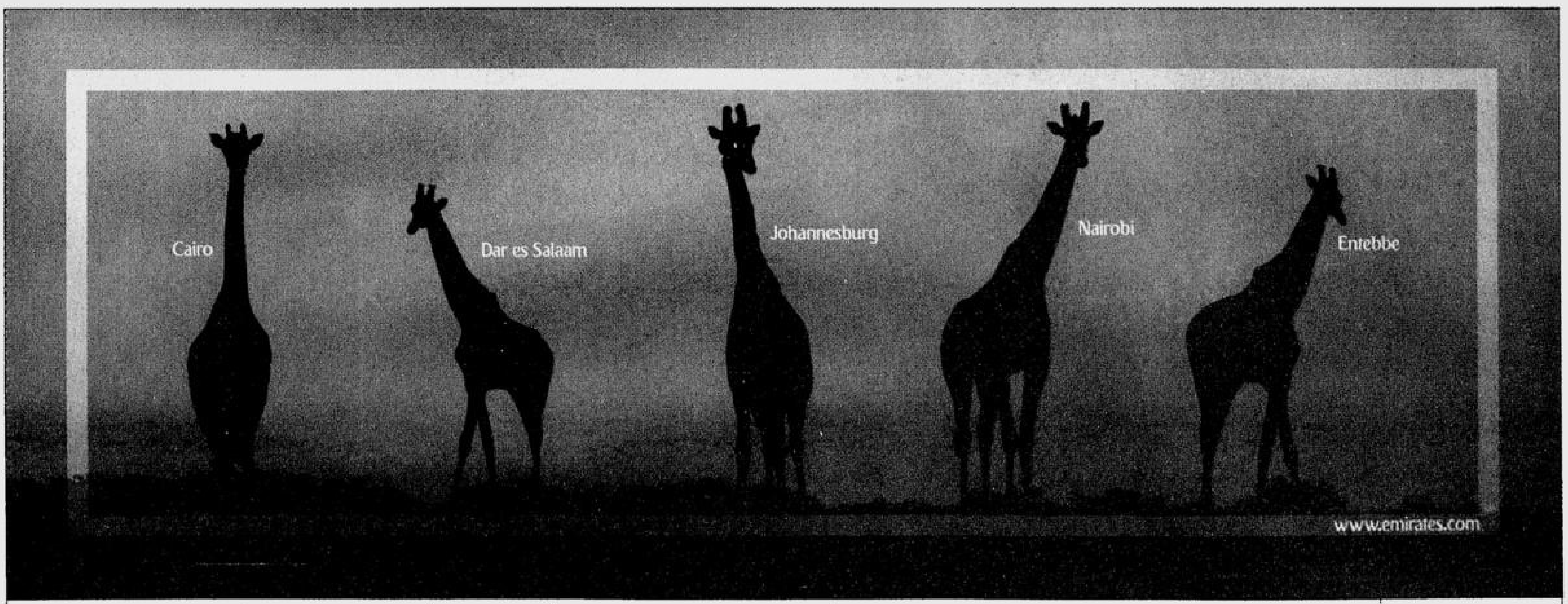

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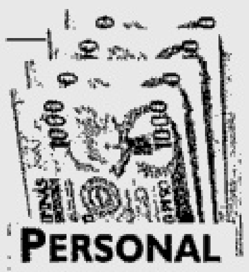
Tired of savings? Try mutuals

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

INDIVIDUALS looking for investments normally turn to either a savings account or placements in treasury bills to make their money grow.

The truth of the matter, however, is that a savings account normally yields an interest of less than 5 percent while T-bill rates are now down to historic lows.

With this kind of an environment, maybe it is time to look for an alternative investment facility such as mutual funds, which are very big in the United States but are still in the fledgling state in the Philippines.



PERSONAL FINANCE

Adelbert Legasto of the asset management group of the Bank of the Philippine Islands says in an interview that mutual funds are good investment vehicles especially for those who do not know about investment instruments such as government securities, commercial papers and the stock market.

By investing in the shares issued by a mutual fund company, an individual can avail himself of expert advice from the people operating the trust fund or mutual fund.

Legasto says the interest rates at the end of the year are higher than what a savings account will give, and there is virtually no risk depending on the kind of mutual fund.

There are mutual funds that are invested solely in government securities or fixed income securities, and then there are those that are invested in equity issues or shares in the stock market.

TIRED/ C7

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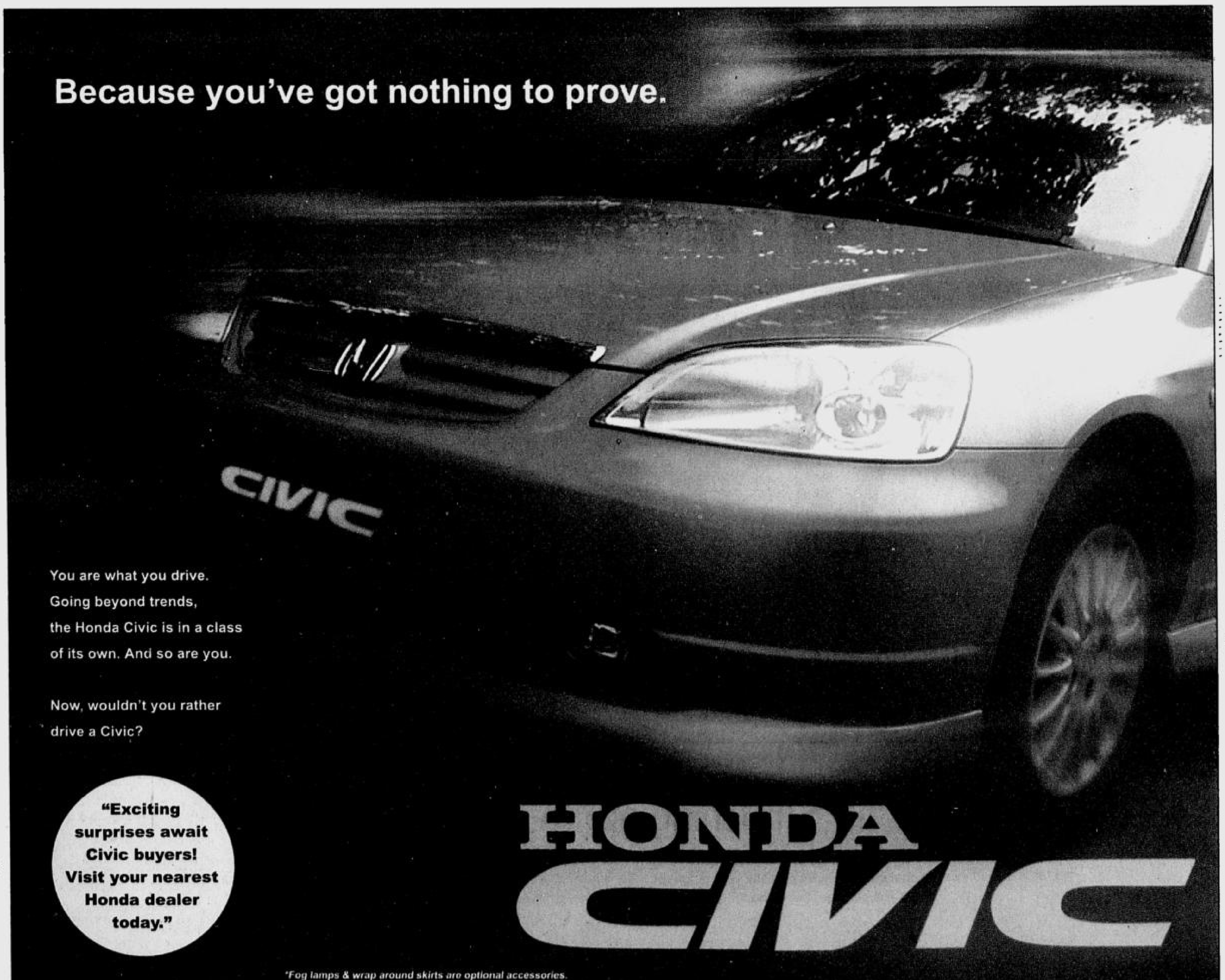

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LIFESTYLE

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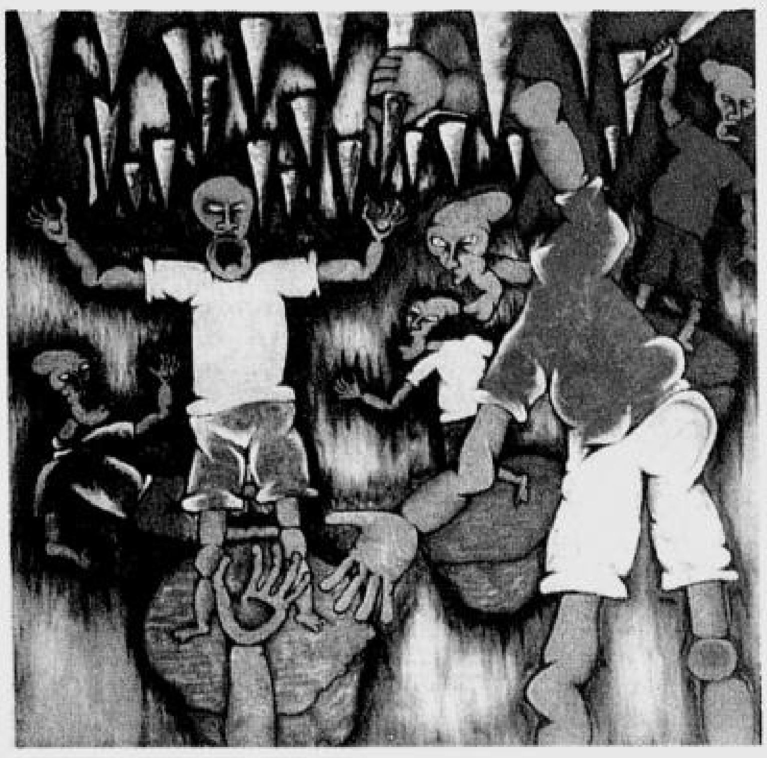
The family that paints together



"WALA Na Duta, Ulan, Tunok" by Nuklar Alvarado

By Constantino C. Tejero

MAYBE it can't be helped. Artists who've been living for years under one roof eventually influence one another to the point that their works often become indistinguishable from one another.

A case in point is the Blanco family of Angono. A quick look at the oeuvre of the entire family would put even a discerning viewer at a loss, because from patriarch José Blanco's work his sons, daughters and even wife have appropriated the subjects, themes, style and technique for their own.

It is the same case with Tam Austria and his son Michael. (One of the few exceptions we can point out is Malang and his sons Soler and Steve Santos.)

When we walked into the Big & Small Art Co. at the Megamall to see the exhibit "Kadugo," we instantly recognized that here was another case of this artistic phenomenon. This time, it was the Alvarados.

Nunelucio Alvarado, one of our leading social-realist painters, is blessed with three sons who also paint: Burog, 27; Bogie, 23; and Nuklar, 19. Father and sons have gathered their works in an exhibit ongoing until March 27, their fourth together.

The Ilonggo term *kadugô* means "related by blood," and here it also has the connotation of "bloody." The Alvarados intend the exhibit as their way of commemorating the Semana Santa, with the central figure as the Kristo of the oppressed, and a pervading sense of violence.

The strong influence of the father is readily apparent in the works of the sons, although they also quote from as far afield as poster art, woodcuts, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, even Hieronymus Bosch. All seem to limit themselves to primary colors with monochromes of black, gray and brown, and to violent facial expressions and physical contortions.

In fact, at first glance, from the gallery's door, we thought the pieces were done by one man at various stages of his life, from his early years to the present.

Visual pun

Alvarado, 52, is of the batch of Egai Fernandez and Antipas Delotavo, children of the First Quarter Storm who created protest murals for rallies. These artists express similar social commentaries, although Alvarado's bold colorism and expressionist visual vocabulary look more related to the works of Danilo Dalena and José Tence Ruiz.

Of the 23 pieces in the exhibit, only three are his. The biggest is a mural-size oil on canvas titled "Mahal na Reyna," a portrait of the Queen of Diamonds as a voluptuous red female nude in transparent ink-blue fabric and green *pakha* clogs, sitting in a cerulean sofa.

One hand is holding bills of various denominations while the other has a remote control. Her sturdy neck sprouts a TV set for head, with the playing-card illustration of the Queen for face, in gray, black, yellow and red. At the four corners of the canvas are blue and brown male profiles spouting gray metal bars.

The work reminds us of Dalena's "Alibangbang" series, and Ruiz's "Katay" series. Here we can read an indictment of materialism, the power-that-be, or even the flesh trade—pick your poison.

The two smaller pieces are in India ink on paper, both disturbing visions of sexual exploitation. "Chick Boy" has a male *anito* face giving the viewer the finger, amid foliage, bugs, rodent, caterpillar. Below him are the profiles of a malignant-looking woman

THE FAMILY/ p.D3

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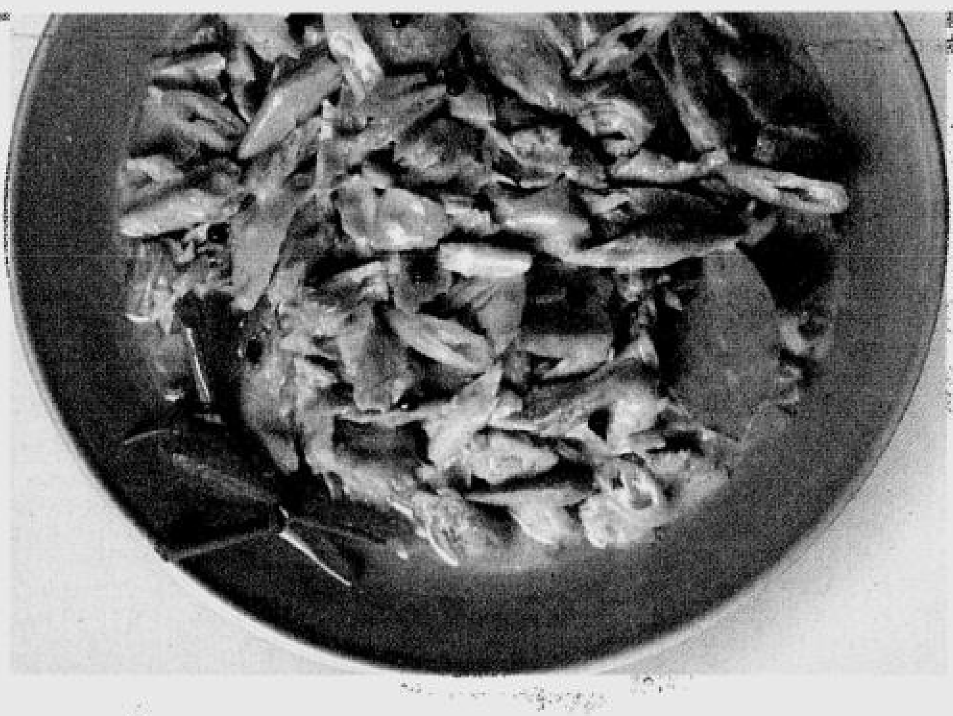

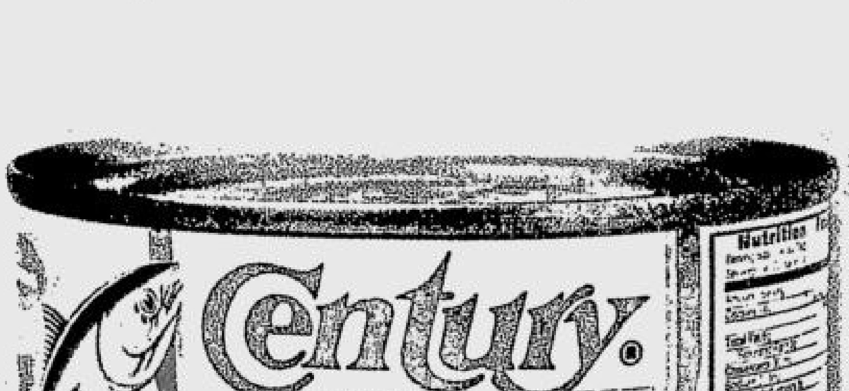

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Uy at Avellana, Gaborni at West, young artists at Aresi

VISUAL ARTS

"THANK You," a painting exhibit of Clairelynn Uy at the Avellana Art Gallery in Pasay City, depicts the artist's favorite toys and childhood. Uy took up fine arts at the Philippine Women's University and is a member of Kasibulan. The exhibit runs until March 28.

GABORNI AT WEST. Rowena Bancod-Gaborni will open her latest exhibit, "escapRIsm," on March 26 at West Gallery, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City. The latest works show a subtle mix of humor, sarcasm and at times, a sense of empathy, providing insights on how artists grapple with or escape from their demons, such as pressure, passion, frustration and burnout. The show will run until April 9. Call 752-7028 to 29.

YOUNG ARTISTS AT ARESI. Aresi Restaurant Bar (at the corner of T. Morato and E. Lopez Jr. Avenues, QC) with Cheira Arts and Design presents "New Ground," which features the works of Rodel Garcia, Lea Zoraina Lim, Vicente Estandarte Jr., Paulo Vinluan and Marina Lynn Cruz. The exhibit tackles such themes as transience, subversions and deviations, and spatial perceptions. The exhibit runs until May 18. Call 412-6234, 927-1725 and 929-3644.

UE GRADUATES AT MEGAMALL. The graduating class of the University of the East College of Fine Arts will exhibit their works in "Art Core" at the Art Center (SM Megamall) until April 2. Call Finale at 634-2411.

JAPAN POSTERS AT SHANGRI-LA. The exhibit "Discover Japan through Contemporary Posters" introduces the poster works of contemporary Japanese graphic designers. Japanese life is presented through the posters, which are seen as social art and not merely advertising materials. The exhibit runs until April 9 at the Grand Atrium, 2/L, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City. Call 811-6155 to 58.

BALUYUT AT LUZ. "Recent and Vintage Photographs," an exhibit by San Francisco-based photographer Butch Baluyut, is on view at The Luz Gallery, Locsin Building (corner Ayala and Makati Avenues, Makati City). The collection includes black-and-white portraits taken in Manila and the US and color photographs of street life in Manila in the late '70s. The exhibit runs until April 6.

GROUP EXHIBIT AT BIG SKY. Big Sky Mind Artists' Projects (70 18th Ave., Murphy, Cubao, QC) will open "Bobo Strikes Back: Sell out Ver. 2.0" on April 2. The exhibit will feature works by the Boboists, a group of UP Fine Arts graduates. Call 421-2125 or 437-0002.

NUDE EXHIBIT AT PADI'S MINDAVE. A nude painting exhibit and a food festival is going on at the Padi's Mindave Restaurant Bar (corner Mindanao Avenue and Congressional Avenue, QC). Among the nude subjects are actresses Ara Mina, Ynez Veneracion, Piel Morena and Gloria Diaz. Male nudes are bodybuilders of Star Samson Bodybuilding Foundation. The paintings are by the late Jose Joya, Al Perez, Romulo Olazo, Nemi Miranda, Rafael Pacheco, Dante Silverio, Agustin Goy, Angel Cacnio, Rudolph Gonzales, Greg Bolanos, Dante Castilo, Mar Borlongan and Roland Santos. The exhibit runs until April 30. Call 722-9981, 700-5221 to 23.

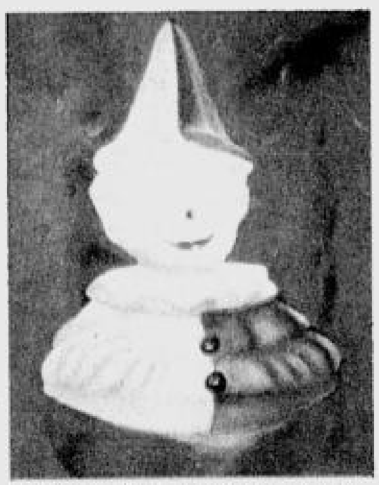
SALUBAYBA AT BOSTON. "Figured Realities," the first solo exhibit of young artist Don Salubayba, opens on April 6 at Boston Gallery. The exhibit illustrates "man as a container" and tackles the limitless capability of man's mind. The exhibit runs until April 27. Call 722-9205.

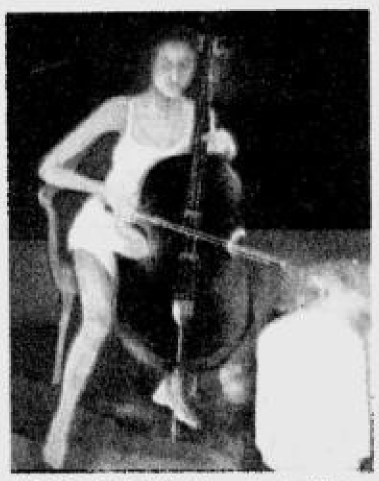
AUSTRALIAN CONTEMPORARY ART. The Australian Embassy is holding "Foundations of Gold," an exhibit of contemporary art and craft by artists working with gold from six cities of the Asia-Pacific at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila. The exhibit runs until May 4.

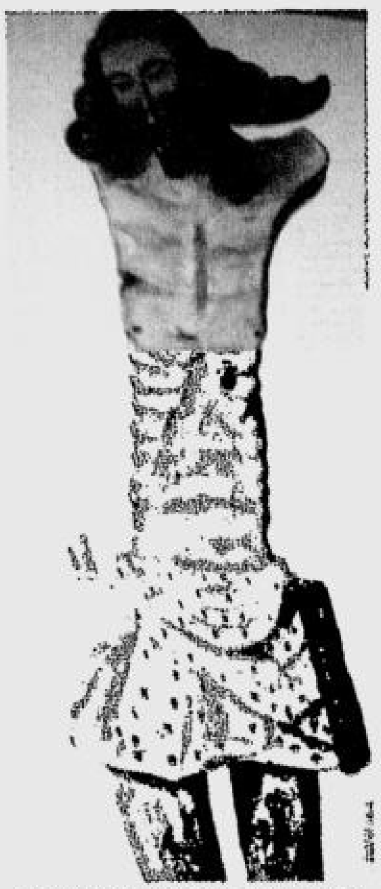
WORKSHOP. Galeria de las Islas will hold summer art workshops. The beginners workshops will start April 15, while advanced classes start April 16. Art pieces will be exhibited. Registration is until April 10. Classes will be limited to 12 participants each. Call 527-2113/3842.

FILM WORKSHOP. The University of the Philippines Film Center is now accepting applications for its Summer Production Workshops. This year, the center is offering workshops in basic video production, basic photography, digital editing and video animation for teens and adults. Call 926-2722, 926-3640 or 920-5301 local 4589.

CHILDREN'S ART WORKSHOPS. Faber-Castell will hold a series of free children's art workshops in cooperation with SM Supermalls starting April 2 at SM City North Edsa. The culminating activity is an exhibit on April 4. There will also be workshops at SM Megamall, SM City Manila, SM Southmall, and SM Fairview. Call 361-1791 to 92.

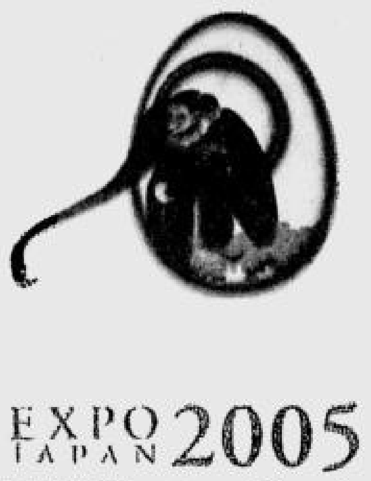

"HANGING at the Moment," oil on canvas, by Clairelynn Uy at Avellana Art Gallery


"MOONLIGHT Sonata," oil on canvas, by Rowena Gaborni at West Gallery


"KRISTO," lithograph by Dick Baldovino and original sculpture by Claude Tayag, is part of "Ecclesiastical," a Lenten exhibit of paintings and sculptures depicting the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, and of different Philippine churches. Works displayed are by Ang Kiukok, Solomon Saprid, Ramon de Ocampo, Inday Cadapan, Jes Garcia, Mark Shellshear, Antonio Doctor Garcia, Isagani Tolentino and Frank Gajo. The exhibit runs until March 31 at Galeria de las Islas, Intramuros. Call 527-2113.

SHE PAINTS JUST LIKE A WOMAN

The paintings of the women artists in the Saturday Group are on exhibit at the 3/L of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall (Shaw Boulevard side) until March 27. "Kulay Pinay" showcases the works of (seated, from left) Mara Cruz, Tessie Pecaña, Myra Caymat; (standing, from left) Remy Boquiren, Inna Naanep Vitasa, Migs Villanueva, Lydia Velasco, Anna de Leon, Chuchi de Vega and Janice Luison Young. Also exhibited are the works of Lorna Montilla and Merci Melchor.



JAPANESE posters at Shangri-La Plaza

Bonding in art's name

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THEY went to different schools, work along diverging styles, but have come together as one group of artists. Calling themselves "Pintanaw" ("to paint and view"), these dozen artists have mounted a show to mark their 16th year as a group.

Their bonding stronger than ever, they are Lino Acasio, Boy Bandalan, Buds Convocar, Eliezer Dimaculangan, Caloy Gabuco, Jimmy Kwong, Robbie Nubla, Omi Reyes, Fred Ramirez, Danilo Santiago, Fidel Sarmiento and Melencio Sapnu.

The Pintanaw 2002 exhibit at Galerie Y at SM Megamall's Art Walk (until end of March) offers an insight into a generation of artists whose earnest attempts to get away from the illustrational and decorative mold have influenced a latter and younger breed of artists. Most of these artists (now in their middle age) have truly evolved, developing new approaches and techniques, not to mention the self-confidence that marks maturity.

The more familiar names are those of Sarmiento, the newly elected president of the Art Association of the Philippines; Gabuco, a perennial winner in art competitions; Santiago, Kwong and Reyes.

Sarmiento is best known for his works that delve into our past—mainly old crumbling stonehouses—which he reinterprets in the modernist mode. His works evoke nostalgia, a longing for cultural artifacts of the colonial past, that is, however, embodied in a markedly abstract sensibility.

Gabuco, also working in the representational mode, is known for his depictions of the Mother and Child. Gabuco wields his brushstrokes mellifluously, capturing his subjects with a venerable, iconic sense, and with unmistakable Pinoy physiognomy.

Nubla is another artist whose metier is the all-too-familiar mother-and-child iconography. Unlike Gabuco, Nubla depicts his subjects in more or less traditional poses, but with strictly Filipino garb: the *baro't saya*, often with a *salakot*.

Acasio, Sapnu and Bandalan are known for their landscape paintings. Acasio, who has had a number of solo shows to his credit, is a skilled technician of light and shadow, a perfectionist when it comes to depicting the vast, verdant countryside that teems with flora, fish and fowl. I have previously seen his works at Gallery Genesis (where he is a resident artist with Toti Cerda) and they have indeed metamorphosed into objects of awesome pastoral poetry.

Sapnu, working along the impressionist vein, prefers to work on a relatively limited scale, mainly by gently cropping our view of the old *bahay na bato*, as in "The Golden Light," looking spic and span with well-tended flowering shrubs, that shimmer from the rays of the early morning sun.

Bandalan offers a kaleidocope of colors in "Glorious Morning," a dream-like view of a landscape, indeed a colorscape, straight out of Home & Garden: two rows of multi-level shrubs in full bloom dotting a narrow path in that magic hour of dawn.

With his more unusual palette sense, Santiago offers a surreal view of a landscape awash in the colors of the rainbow, and perhaps the light fantastic, a layering of paint that is closer in spirit to Lamarroza in his Amburayan period.

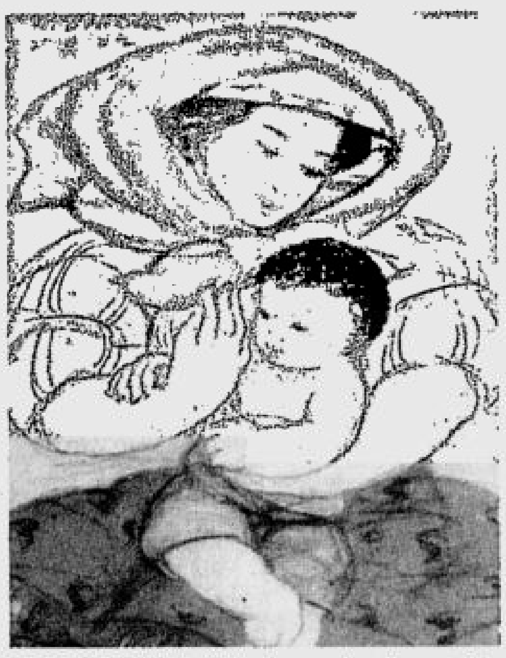
Not resembling any of the artists in the materials he uses, Convocar uses metal sheets which he cuts out into horse figures, a subject that auspiciously identifies the current year in the Chinese horoscope. Convocar paints his works with an antique finish, adding essential frame-like motifs on the upper and lower portions of the main subject.

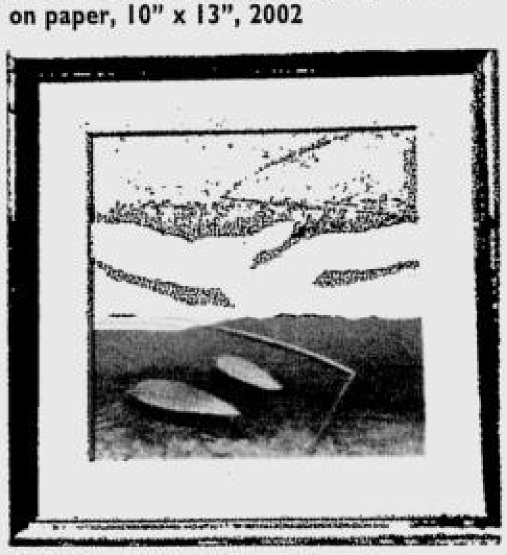
Kwong is an artist with a keen eye for the unusual side of his subjects. In his entry, a rendering of the bamboo, he focuses on the ribs of the plant, with their colorful segmented hues, and the protective outgrowths emanating from the trunks.

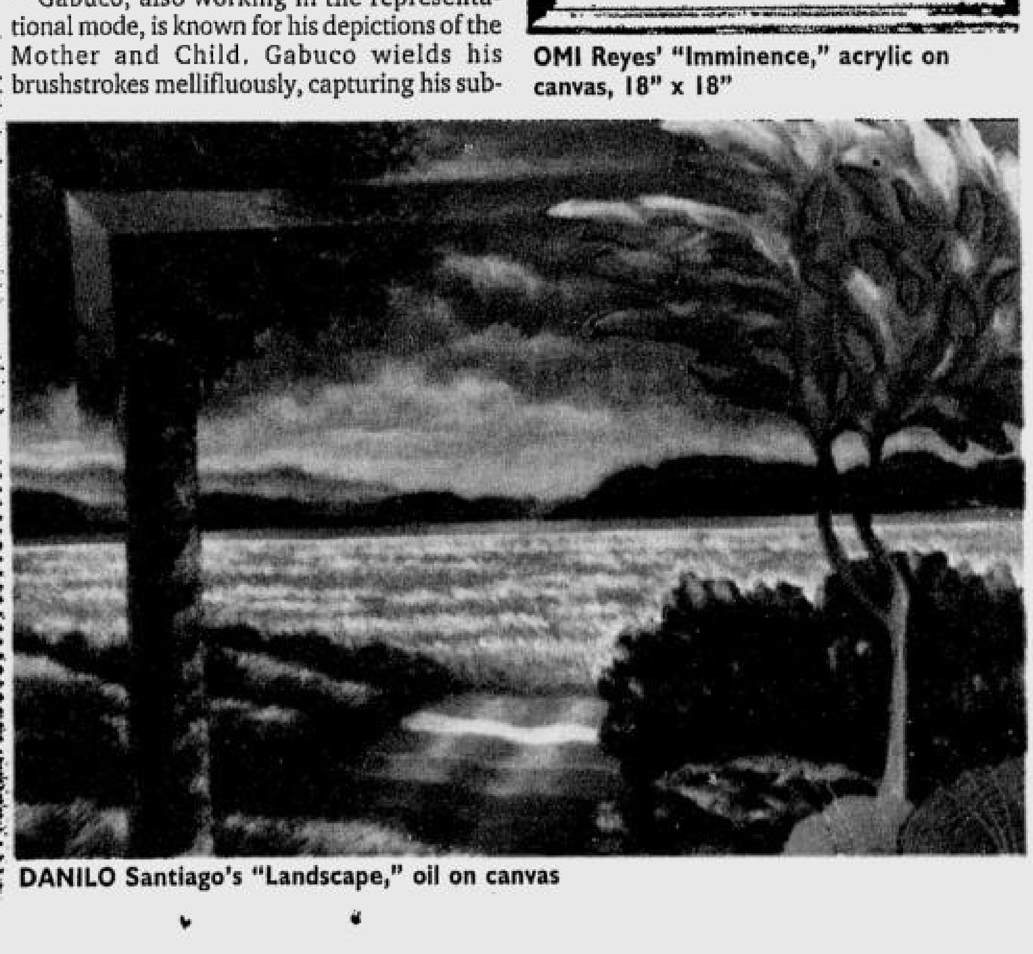
More or less working in the abstract mode are Omi Reyes and Fred Ramirez. The former has abstract landscapes, with rich textural effects, that play up the leaf-and-sun motif. He also incorporates the image of intersecting lines, a welcome calligraphic element to jazz up the viewer's feeling.

Ramirez, also a hardcore abstractionist, uses internal landscapes to evoke mental states and emotions. Applying bright splashes of paint and even generous impasto on his canvas, with occasional contrasting blobs for accent, Ramirez emerges strongly–even defiantly—from this group of realists and surrealists, completing the roster of styles from this group of feel-good artists.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo @yahoo.com


ROBBIE Nubla's "Haplos ng Ina," pastel on paper, 10" x 13", 2002


OMI Reyes' "Imminence," acrylic on canvas, 18" x 18"


DANILO Santiago's "Landscape," oil on canvas

Leonardo Hidalgo conducts art workshops

WELL-KNOWN artist-sculptor Leonardo M. Hidalgo will conduct a summer art workshop for children and adults. The workshop includes basic drawing for beginners; and portrait and landscape painting for intermediate and advanced students using watercolor, acrylic and oil. Workshop schedule: April 5-24, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 2-4 p.m. and 6:30-8:30 p.m., at the Isabella's Art Gallery, 77-79 Roces Ave., Bgy. Laging Handa, QC.

Hidalgo, hailed as one of the best Filipino watercolorists, is a multiawarded visual artist. He has been featured in more than 80 major group exhibitions and has had more than 30 solo shows here and abroad. From 1969 to 1992, he was a faculty member of the College of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Santo Tomas. He was Painting Department head from 1979 to 1985. He recently held two solo exhibits at the Asia Art Gallery (Manila) and at the City of San Fernando, La Union.

On March 2, Hidalgo was conferred the La Union Service Award, on the occasion of the 152nd foundation anniversary celebration of the province of La Union, for excellence and dedication in promoting art, history and culture. He was cited for his sculptural work at the Freedom Park of San Fernando, a shrine to the nation's great Filipino heroes, martyrs and statesmen. It is the only memorial of its kind in the country, recognized as a tourist destination in La Union.

Call Wally at 374-1271 for registration.

PLDT-DPC art contest winners known

UNIVERSITY of the East-Kalookan art student Jaime Gubaton bested 59 other entries from 22 schools all over the country to win the 2002-2003 PLDT-DPC Telephone Directory Cover 16th Visual Art National Competition with his entry "I.T.—An Opening to a New World."

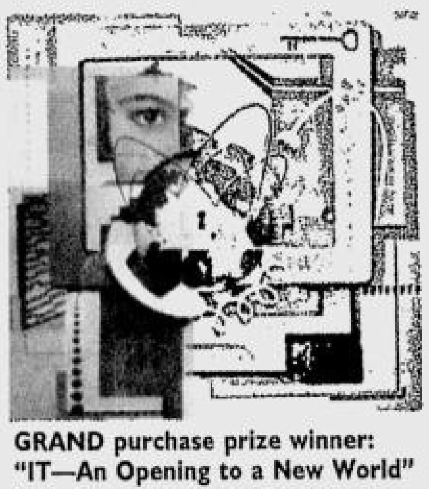
Jointly sponsored by Philippine Long Distance Co. and Directories Philippines Corp., this year's contest carries the theme "Communication in the IT World."

Mervin Pimentel of Far Eastern University was second with "Bagong Sibol ng Pagbabago," a 29" x 29" oil on canvas, while another UE-Kalookan student, Ryan Garay, was third with "Keeping 'IT' Alive (Then, Now, Forever)." Pimentel won the second purchase prize of P50,000 and a trophy, and Garay was awarded P40,000 and a trophy.

Other winners and their prizes include Eric Madlangbayan of Technological University of the Philippines ("Tomorrow's World Today"), fourth prizewinner with P35,000 and a plaque; and Rexell Livelo of Philippine Women's University ("Bagong Panahon, Bagong Kumunikasyon"), fifth prizewinner with P30,000 and a plaque.

Mark Ramsel Salvatus III of the University of Sto. Tomas ("I.T.: Eye on the World, Our Window to the World"), Rolando Manahan Jr. of Bulacan State University ("Sa Mundo ng Kaalaman, Ano, Paano, Kailan, Saan") and Simoun Esequiel Quilang of FEU ("Conversing with Contentment") were named first, second and third honorable mentions, respectively, and received plaques.

All trophies and plaques awarded to the winners were designed and executed by National Artist for Sculpture Napoleon V. Abueva.


GRAND purchase prize winner: "IT—An Opening to a New World" by Jaime Gubaton of UE-Kalookan

The family that paints together

From page D1

and a sharp-toothed rooster with a condom between them.

"Pocake" is a verbal as well as a visual pun, of an elaborately decorated cake with a gash at the center shaped like the labia, while male faces with pointed tongues are eyeing it with craving or disbelief. Below it is a man spewing vomit, with a dog lapping it up.

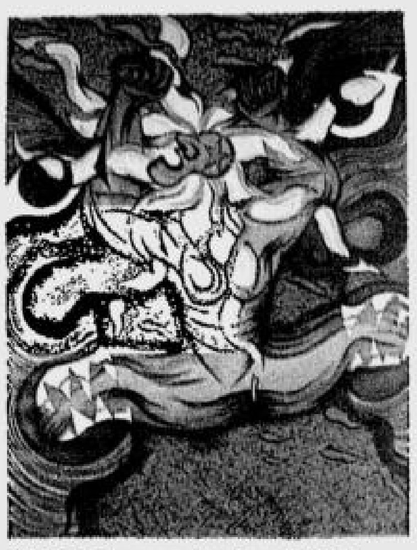
Intense hues

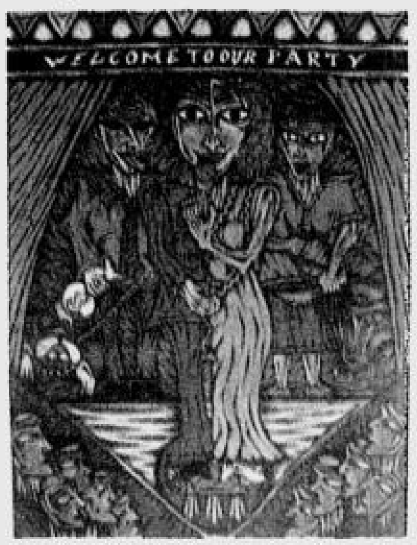
Alvarado took up fine arts at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. His sons never have had technical or formal studies in the arts aside from basic drawing, but they have assimilated his ideas and technique. In their larger pieces, all three even work in the style of his portable mural.

"It's just through observing him work every day," says Burog. "In colors and subjects maybe we are similar, but in brushstrokes we're different. My brothers' works are more similar to his, especially Nuklar's, because they're still young. But I think I have evolved away from his style."

The blood-red lettering against intense hues of blue and yellow in his acrylic on canvas "Bayan, Bayan, Bayan, Di Pa Tapos ang Laban Mo" takes on the colorism of his father. It is an almost abstract flowerlike pattern—an interlocking of streams of blood and the flames of the sun—until one looks closer and sees it's been formed by hundreds of tiny figures of clenched fists, flexed arms, faces tightened by screams, banners, sticks and firearms.

This is poster art done as meticulously as with a miniature. Burog used to be a League of Filipino Students activist, and that's one more link with his father. The work is his commentary on the various Edsa revolts that had occurred, and the title itself was a line he used to chant with his fellows in the streets.


"ANG Silangan Ay Pupula" by Burog Alvarado



"DOBLE Kara" by Bogie Alvarado

"Ang Silangan Ay Pupula" is another large acrylic on canvas, but more figurative, showing a brown male nude in a screaming fit, consumed by a yellow tentacled sun. The gray flowing lines with patches of black and white form the profiles of two saber-toothed ogres devouring the man. It seems like a nightmare vision from Orozco or Goya, of Saturn eating his sons.

Grim wit

For more nightmare visions, see the works of the two other Alvarados, particularly the smaller pieces in pen and ink and ballpen on paper: body parts floating on the air, hand gripping a machete, arched windows, floor patterns, angel wings, slippers, silhouette of man with dagger, tombstones, leafless tree, pig, fork, dog, wormlike human figures, dagger sticking in skull, winged human head, disembodied arm sticking out of the ground, human torso with fish head.

Nuklar is particularly fond of Bosch's visual vocabulary. In his bigger works, he achieves grim wit, as in "Wala Duta, Tanom kag Tawo." In this comment on rampant logging, the tree stumps become the severed lower portions of the bodies of *manananggals* hovering over an arid brown land under a threatening ink-blue sky. One naked brown body has been decapitated and green saplings sprout from its neck, while its two breasts look like eyeballs bulging from astonishment.

Accomplished in its formal composition is Bogie's large oil on canvas, "Doble Kara." Done in red, yellow and blue, with patches of brown, white and gray, it features a half-man, half-woman figure at the center; bordered by a green-shirted man with a money bag and a pit bull on a leash, and a red-shirted man with a machete and a carabao on a rope with a red K on its forehead. Brown profiles of the audience are rowed against the blue of the orchestra pit. The yellow rectangle of the stage is the seal of the Republic of the Philippines.

It is a rare father who has imparted such social and artistic commitment to his offspring. Rarer still the offspring with as much commitment.

AT CASA DE CANTABRIA IN MADRID: (from left) Noell el Farol, Reynaldo Concepcion, Eugene Jarque, Ambassador Bernardo, Ma. Del Pilar Pezzi Goytre, Conchitina Bernardo and Benjamin Cabrera

Young Pinoy engravers featured in Madrid

FILIPINOS were bursting with pride during the recent exhibit of four young Filipino engravers at Casa de Cantabria in Madrid. Together with four other Chinese engravers, these artists held a group exhibit called "Arte Oriental—Grabados Chinos y Filipinos."

The Filipino artists were Eugene Jarque, Noell el Farol, Reynaldo Concepcion and Benjamin Torrado Cabrera.

The president of Casa Cantabria, Ma. Del Pilar Pezzi Goytre, welcomed Philippine Ambassador to Spain Joseph Bernardo y Medina and his wife Conchitina Sevilla de Bernardo. Enthusiastically, Goytre recounted how much she encouraged these cultural exchanges, so that the gallery could give Madrid a glimpse of the creativity and uniqueness of style emerging in Asia.

The artists then made a trip to Cuenca, an old town about two hours from Madrid, together with Ambassador and Ms Bernardo, and Philippine consul Jose Maria Cariño, who is an art connoisseur. There they visited the Museo de Arte Abstracto Español, founded by well-known modernist Fernando Zobel.

The centuries-old Casa Colgante (hanging house), Cuenca's well-known historical site, was in an advanced stage of disrepair and neglect when Zobel, together with the city council, restored the house and made it into a museum.

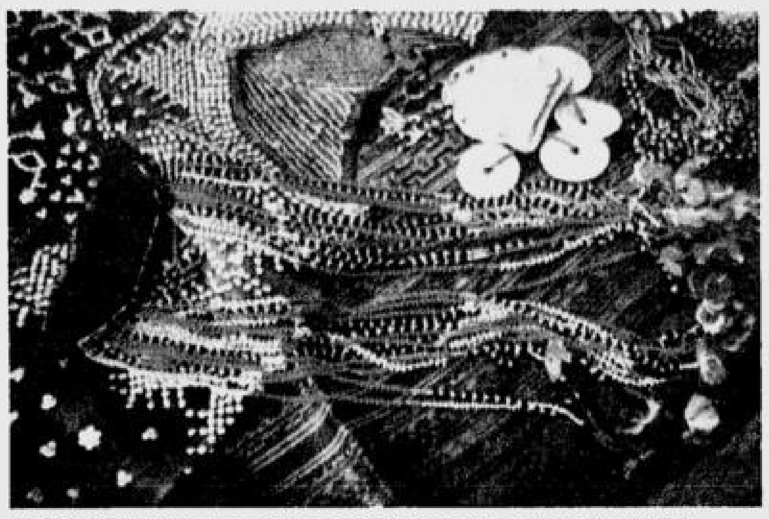
The Casa Colgante is designed to bring the unique landscape of Cuenca indoors, while allowing the sunlight to filter through, and highlight the artwork. The huge, chalky, mountainous terrain is framed by big windows in strategic corners of the house, bringing in the almost surreal surroundings outside.

THE AMBASSADOR and artists at the tomb of Fernando Zobel

Zobel donated his vast collection of modern art and his best artwork to the Fundacion March. Together with the city council, they now maintain the famous hanging house where one can find one of the best collections of modern art in Spain, many of which are from Zobel's private collection.

Upon the request of Ambassador Bernardo, the group was given a private tour in which they were escorted to the quaint and picturesque chapel of San Isidro Labrador. There, in a special corner of the garden that overlooks the mountains and the valley, the painter Zobel now rests.

What made the trip doubly significant was that, Zobel, who was Spanish by nationality, also had Filipino roots.


COMPLETE B'laan costume and *ikat malongs* from Surrallah

Heirloom, antiques, ethnic costumes on sale

AN OLD Padyaw, or dancing *bulol*, handwoven and antique Ifugao and Kalinga sashes, loin strings and highland beads

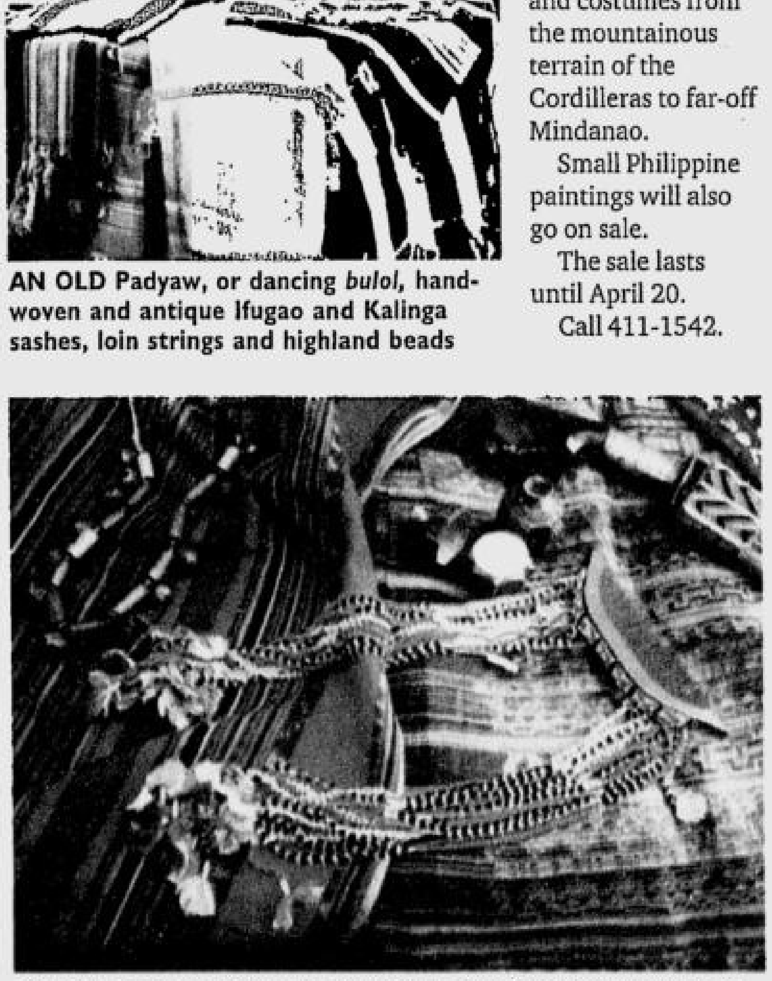
LORNA R. Montilla is holding an "all-to-go sale" at reduced prices before going back to her home province to resume her job as cultural consultant to Antique Gov. Sally Zaldivar Perez.

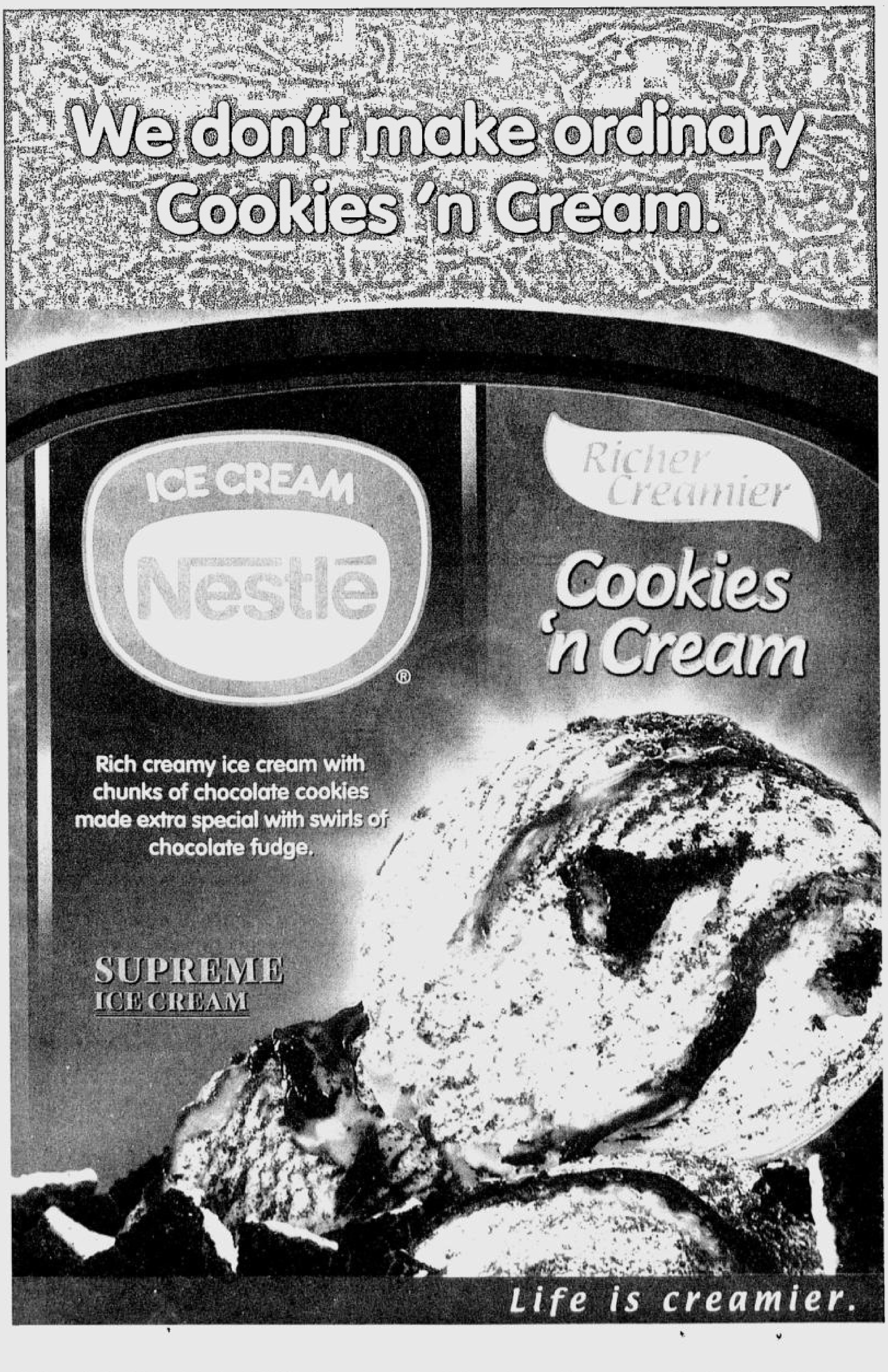
On sale are heirloom and excavated jewelry, old highland dress and costumes from the mountainous terrain of the Cordilleras to far-off Mindanao.

Small Philippine paintings will also go on sale.

The sale lasts until April 20.

Call 411-1542.


B'LAAN headress, Bagobo neckpiece of antique bells and small farm implements from Mindanao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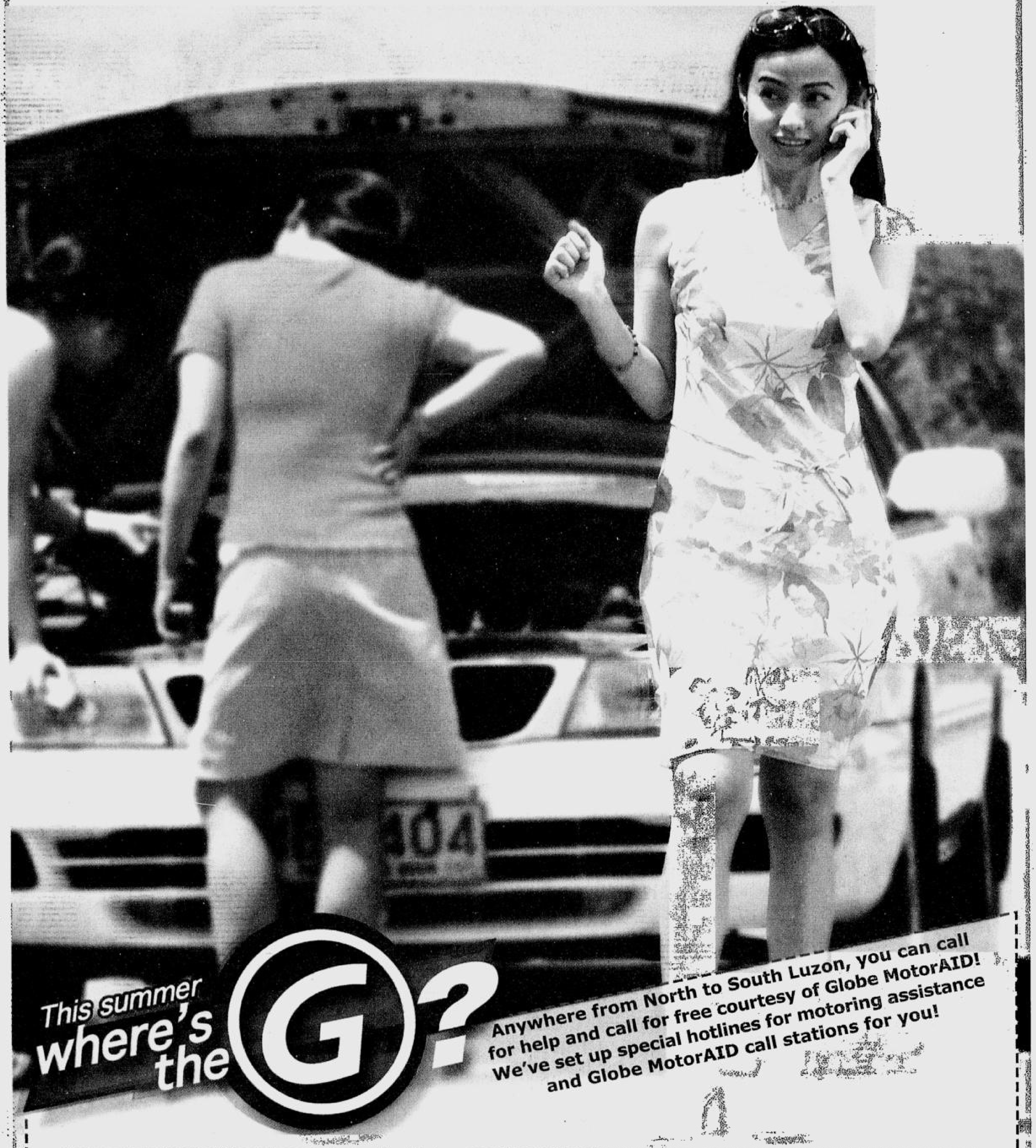

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Divinely inspired inspirations

By Jerome Gomez
Contributor

IF it's any sign of the times, inspirational and spiritual books have become dime a dozen. Has the spirit been so parched by materialism and base desires that it can be falsely watered and misled by tawdry books masquerading as motivational and, worse, spiritual? Whatever, people are not only looking for a good read, but also for spiritual comfort and divine inspiration.

Vivian Yuchengco
Chair, Philippine Stock Exchange

"I love the book 'The Princessa: Machiavelli for Women' by Harriet Rubin. It is for strong women in today's world. It invalidates the notion of subservience and complacency of women to men and society in general. If I have to pick a quote, we'd end up reprinting the entire text, but one of my favorites is: 'Desire rules the world: Say something with conviction and you make it happen.'"

AGOT Isidro

Agot Isidro
Singer, actress

Agot swears by "The Four Agreements," which made it to Oprah's list of favorite things for 2001, by the shamanic teacher and healer Don Miguel Ruiz. The four agreements—be impeccable with your word, don't take anything personally, don't make assumptions, always do your best—may be enough to get her

DIVINELY/ p.E5

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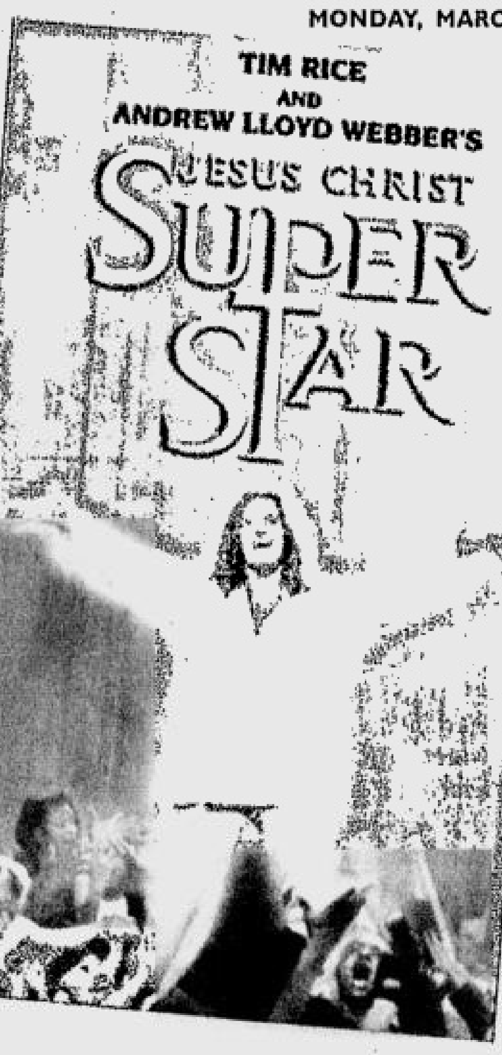
'JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR'

The hippie and the nexter

By **Cora Llamas**
Contributor

REVIEWS

"JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR"
STEREO
MCA



PROBABLY the most definitive version of "Jesus Christ Superstar (JCS)," the rock opera that redefined the Christ figure and modernized the concept of religion for a generation, just might be languishing, forgotten and unused, in video rental shops or bargain counters. "Jesus Christ Superstar: 2000," aired here by cable channel Star World during last year's Holy Week, is gaining a following in Europe and the United States.

The high accolades for this GenX version of the singing Jesus come from no less than Andrew Lloyd Webber, the musical theater genius who composed the music to Tim Rice's brilliant lyrics in the '70s.

"I've waited 30 years to see **this** 'Superstar,' " he said. After watching Australian director Gale Edwards' London revival some years ago, he knew it was time to reinvent the play for today's audience. What better way to do it than shoot Edwards' concept for the video format?

According to Edwards, "Andrew said I really want a new production and I want it redefined for the late 1990s. I don't want a revival of a rock opera with everyone in bell-bottom pants leaping about."

"JCS" fans will inevitably make comparisons between this new "Superstar" and the popular 1973 movie, which was basically a hippie reenactment in 1970 Israel.

A certain resistance is certainly expected from that particular generation who first saw Jesus' bitter human side in "Gethsemane" and sang the pangs of unrequited love in Magdalene's "I Don't Know How to Love Him." It was with a mixture of dread and fear, springing from my own childhood loyalties, that I tuned in to "JCS 2000" last year. I had expected a ho-hum treatment at the most, and a travesty at the least.

Jury in

A year later, after repeated viewings have forcibly replaced my worn-out VHS with a DVD, the jury is finally in. Webber, who produced the video, and Andrews, did a remarkable job of making "JCS" relevant again, without in any way imitating or diminishing the 1973 movie.

"JCS 2000" is neither a copycat nor a successor. It can stand on its own. In fact, watching both versions consecutively can be a gem of a theatrical experience.

Movie director Norman Jewison lets his landscape do the talking. Nature acts as the invisible hand of an angry God and at the same time as a mirror baring all the secrets of the major players. Black storm clouds literally close in on the fleeing Judas (Carl Anderson). Vultures hover the skies of Israel as the high priests plot Christ's death.

In one of the film's moving moments, the shade of night wrestles with the rising dawn in tune to the conflicted Jesus' inner struggle whether or not to give up his life. And when Christ crosses the point of no return, he descends the slopes of a mountain that literally divides him from anguished apostles pleading, "Could We Start Again Please?"

Edwards' story of the Messiah's last days is shot inside a studio, staged as musical theater, not a movie. Every space and corridor of what appears to be a simple set is maximized to create mood, texture and message. The claustrophobic set, aided by a very grim, stylish production design, actually works in her favor. Christ's Israel is depicted as a totalitarian state with black-clad, armored temple guards and Roman soldiers looking like Darth Vader disciples.

Done deal

The shadowy High Priests are not as humane as their bearded, red-garbed movie counterparts who still deliberated on and weighed Jesus' fate. The new ones act like his death is already a done deal in their council meeting. A growling Caiaphas (Frederick Owens) is pushed and provoked, not subtly balanced, by a new bald Annas (Michael Shaeffer) who is a cross between Nosferatu and the aliens in "Dark City."

This Jerusalem certainly feels like the real one, and the subdued and eerie lighting gives a whole new meaning to the term "black as sin." When they finally come out of their shell, the evil-ly grinning people glide like predatory vampires. No wonder Jesus has to die for them. And He dies literally in their hands.

Jewison's horrific interpretation of Christ's flogging by a soldier amid bloodthirsty a crowd is still unmatched by any Jesus movie. Edwards' takes an entirely different turn. The infamous 39 lashes are a stunning choreography of sadists pirouetting through the air to hit the bound Messiah, leaving bloody marks on his broken body.

The only kind of light the bad guys are comfortable with are the cold decadent ones. Instead of traipsing through a pool, Rik Mayall's Herod dances the Charleston with his minions in a glittering Las Vegas casino.

Unlike the movie's funnier Josh Mostel who just lashes out at Christ, Mayall's feral grin is belied by a hard glint. This Herod isn't gay, he's evil.

Genuine warm radiance filters through this dark Jerusalem only when Jesus and his yuppie, interracial followers enter in rainbow costumes. It's not as obvious as circling haloes, but the difference is clearly felt like fresh air coming into a polluted garbage dump. While the movie practically makes the disciples one faceless interchangeable bunch, this version makes each one a type of the Nexter crowd. The wide-eyed Asian (John), the Afro-American panther (James), the Tom Cruise lookalike (Andrew?), the bespectacled nerd (Matthew?).

Unforgettable

Tony Vincent's Simon, with blond mohawk hair, grunge khaki look and in-your-face attitude lives up to his Zealot's reputation. He's so gung-ho about making war that Jesus singles him out, "Why are you obsessed with fighting times and fates you can't defy?" ("What's the Buzz?") The warning comes too late. In his unforgettable titular solo, this Simon and his fanatics attack the temple guards, increasing the tension and the powers-that-be's anger against the Messiah. In the movie, Larry Marshall's catharsis for his liberation expresses itself in mere danced dreams.

Overall, the singing in the movie is much better. Ted Neeley's Jesus doesn't just bawl out effortlessly the high notes that "JCS 2000's" Glenn Carter tries hard to reach—he acts out the lyrics in a wide range of emotions: despair, anger, resignation, love. Anderson's Judas can outsing Jerome Pradon's anytime; the French actor's inability to hit certain notes sometimes makes his voice screechy and edgy. Barry Dennen's Pontius Pilate conveys arrogance, haute aristocracy, and fear and growing respect for Christ all at the same time, while Fred Johannsen's military governor just swings from intimidation to guilt.

The acting prize for character complexity, though, goes to "JCS 2000." Jesus, Judas, Magdalene (Renee Carter) and the rest of the disciples act like friends who have been through a lot together. A very intense, memorable "Last Supper" shows how pain of betrayal and disillusionment can cut deeper because of that friendship. Each shattering close-up of an actor's face—confused, angry, terrified, weeping—echoes Judas' accusation against Jesus: "This is where you brought us to—our ideals die around us, and all because of you!"

The triangle between Judas, Jesus and Magdalene is tighter in this version. The two closest to the future king are always battling it out on who gets to be top dog. While Yvonne Ellison's Magdalene is a milquetoast, Renee Castle's is a very modern woman who speaks her mind, puts her foot down and fights against her own passions for Christ.

Two J's

Inevitably, the spotlight is trained on Jesus and Judas. The '70s interpretation casts Judas as an unwitting scapegoat maneuvered to betray a messiah who is bent on his own death. These motivations carried the actors, sweeping each with several dominant emotions: Anderson was angry and rebellious most of the time, while Neely's distant Jesus (except for "Gethesemane") generally showed detachment, coolness and a sense of fatality.

Carter's smooth-faced, blond-surfer Christ is stronger and infinitely more charismatic. He's not led to his destiny like a lamb to the slaughter; he's marching out with determined face and fixed eyes. Even in his worst moments, he is always reaching out with compassion—to the crowds, Pilate, Mary and Judas.

Pradon won rave reviews for Judas with good reason. His complex character is intelligent one moment, childlike the next, Jesus' worst critic and his best friend. While Anderson's Judas was afraid for Israel, Pradon's also cares what happens to his Messiah. In the end, his betrayal

THE HIPPIE / p.E3

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FEW REMAINING SLOTS LEFT!
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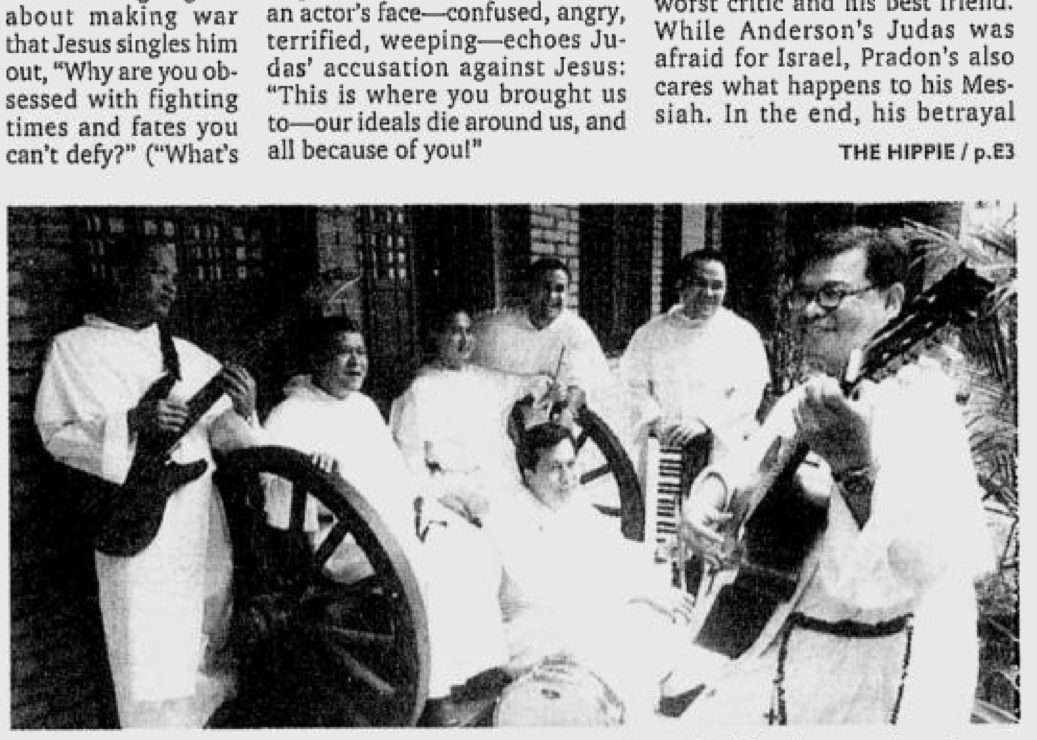


SINGING DOMINICANS. From left, Fr. Dennis Maquiraya, Fr. Nap Encarnacion, Fr. Isidro Abano, Fr. Deng de La Cruz, Fr. Auckhs Enjaynes, Fr. Jepoy Arsciwals and Fr. Joemar Sibug

OPM album by jamming friars

FOR PRIESTS like the fathers of Inggo 1587, everything is a spiritual experience. The same attitude should apply to lay people who must feel God's presence in everything, as the song "I'll Always Be There" bids them to do: "I'll be your light in the dark/Hold you close to my heart/You have my word, my friend/I'll be there."

Ordinary acts in fact could transcend to the spiritual level of God's love, according to Fr. Jepoy Arsciwals, O.P., Inggo 1587's keyboardist and main composer.

Inggo 1587 is a pop band of seven Dominican friars. The name is the hip version of Santo Domingo de Guzman or St. Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers (OP); the number refers to the year when the first Dominicans arrived in the Philippines. Aside from Father Arsciwals, the band is composed of Fr. Didoy Abano (flutist), Fr. Deng de la Cruz (drummer), Fr. Nap Encarnacion (lead vocalist and percussionist), Fr. Dennis Maquiraya (base guitarist), Fr. Auckhs Enjaynes (lead guitarist) and Fr. Joemar Sibug (rhythm guitarist). Inggo 1587 has recently release a self-titled album of original songs.

"Our songs aren't the preachy type even if these eventually inspire listeners," assured Father Arsciwals. They are meant to foster the faith through a feeling of peace, as in the song "If Only I Could": "If only I could dispel the noise/Set the rhyme of songs/With an air of distinction/Surely there would never be/No point of confusion."

Primarily aimed at the MTV generation, the songs of Inggo 1587 are radio-friendly. However, they remain true to their mission to spread the faith. Hence, Inggo 1587 continues to perform to raise funds for church constructions and other apostolic activities to build the edifice of the faith. So far, Inggo 1587 has raised funds to build some parishes. It has also traveled abroad for benefit shows.

Another song that people could identify with is the OPM "Kailan Lamang," which explores the theme of friendship: "*Salamat sa 'yo, o aking kaibigan/Ikaw ay nariyan upang ako'y alalayan/Dahil sa yo'y nabatid kong hiram lamang/Ang aking buhay at aking kapalaran.*"

But all in all, the songs are simple prayers to God, such as "Touch Me Now": "And now, I know I only need/The strength and grace to believe/I know that you can teach me/How to live."

"Inggo 1587" offers 10 original songs, including "Until I Find You," "Holding on to a Dream," "Come," "Gone Far Away," "Precious Love" and "Someday."

"Inggo 1587" is available at Odyssey and other record bars. Call the Letran Media Center at 525-0398 or 527-7693 to 97.

Jesuit Holy Week specials on TV

THIS Holy Week, Jesuit Communications and PLDT invite everyone to learn from the stories of those who struggle to be holy.

"May Call Waiting Ka Ba?" looks into the question of vocation. Through interviews and vignettes, three priests, a brother and a nun share what it has meant for them to share in Christ's story.

"May Call Waiting Ka Ba?" airs on March 28, 9:30 p.m., on GMA 7, and on March 30, 8 p.m., on RPN 9.

"Message Sent" explores the nature of mission. A Jesuit priest sent to Nigeria, a contemplative nun, a priest whose parish is a mountain and a little brother of Jesus share the stories of their missions. Their stories are our stories as well as we go about our own missions in concrete response to Christ's call. "Message Sent" airs on March 29, 9 p.m., on GMA 7, and on March 30, 8:30 p.m., on RPN 9.

"Your Dwelling Place" is another story told in song. Inspired by a healing concert of the same title that took place early this year, "Your Dwelling Place" invites viewers to join in a journey of song with Himig Heswita and Friends. This special musical presentation features the works of Jesuit composers such as Arnel Aquino, Manoling Francisco, Eduardo Hontiveros and Nemesio Que, as well as works by other lay composers. Ordered around the four weeks of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, "Your Dwelling Place" seeks to bring the healing that is at the heart of Holy Week. It airs on March 29, 8 p.m., on GMA 7.

"THE RESURRECTION" at the Jesuit Villa, Mirador Hills, Baguio City

Mass for young skeptics on Studio 23

DO you think the Mass is pointless? Then watch "Sunday for Skeptics—A Space for Seekers," a television Mass designed for young Catholics.

Through the show, you may discover the beauty and poetry of the Sunday Mass by hearing the choirs of the Jesuit Music Ministry. Discover the secret dwelling place of God in every person's heart.

"Sundays for Skeptics" airs on Studio 23 every Sunday, 8 a.m., beginning March 31. It is produced by Jesuit Communications.

The hippie . . .

From page E2

springs from love, not hatred.

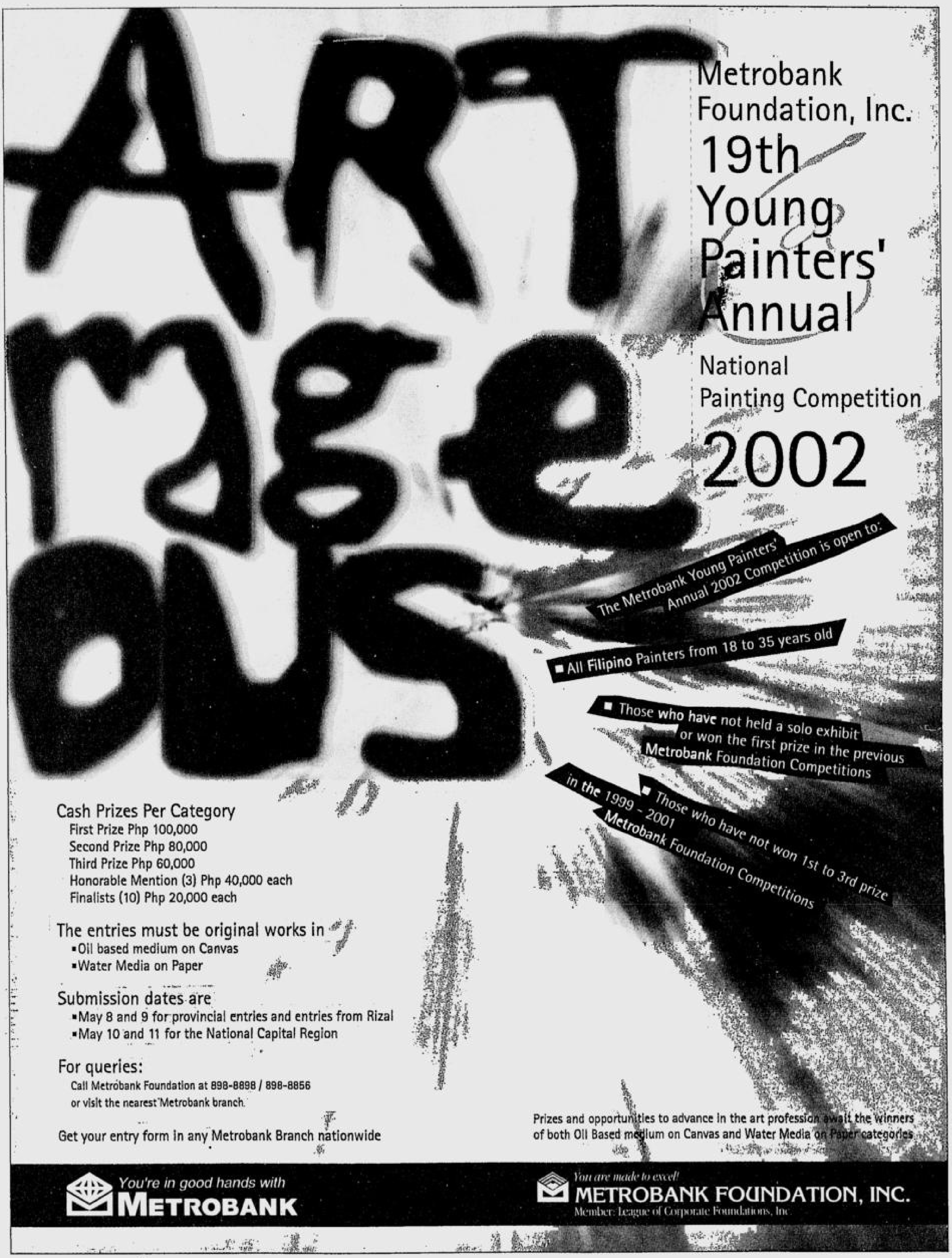
When Christ is crucified, he feels it, too, in spite of his taunts in the climactic title song. In one of the bloodiest scenes in any Christ movie, Judas returns as a red-satinned angel from hell accompanying a blood-streaked Jesus carrying his cross to Golgotha. News cameras crowd around Christ to capture the deed for eternity. This scene is in stark contrast to the 1973 version which has Jesus' newfound fame symbolized by the transformation of his torn clothes into impeccably white and sparkling robes.

Like the movie, "JCS 2000" ends with a question mark, the same that the authors had asked from the start. That many young people rediscover their Christian faith through the musical is laden with poetic irony; Webber and Rice wrote it as Jews questioning the tenets of Christianity. In all versions, Judas always asks: "Who are **you**? What have **you** sacrificed?"

The last shots always end with a cross. The movie's long wooden one was draped over a fiery setting sun and rooted in dusty earth. The filmed stage version's is formed out of an arrangement of incandescent glittering lights.

Both proclaim the cross' enduring power over the centuries. Regardless of our faith, it is the question that faces us now this Holy Week. If we need a more modern, entertaining way to reexamine or reaffirm that faith, there are two versions of "JCS" to choose from.

Rentals and sales of video tapes of "Jesus Christ Superstar" 1973 and 2000 are available at many local video shops. "JCS 2000" copies are frequently found in the bargain sections


ART mag e OUS

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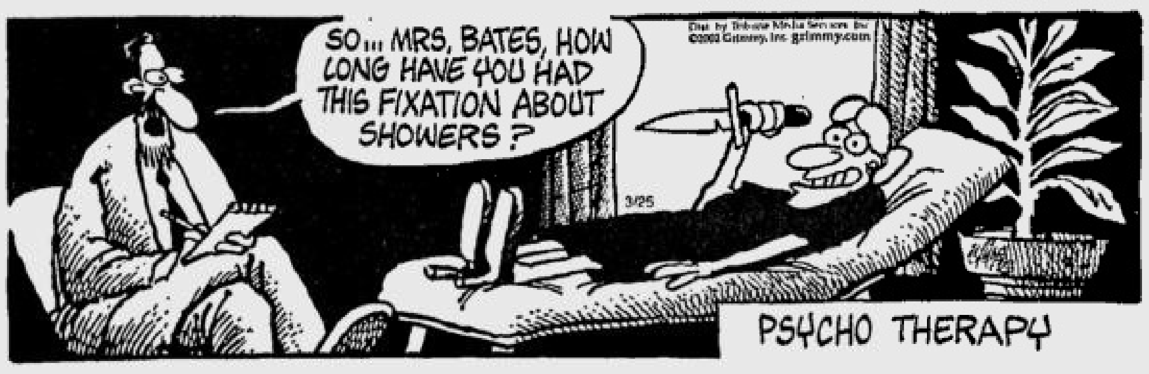
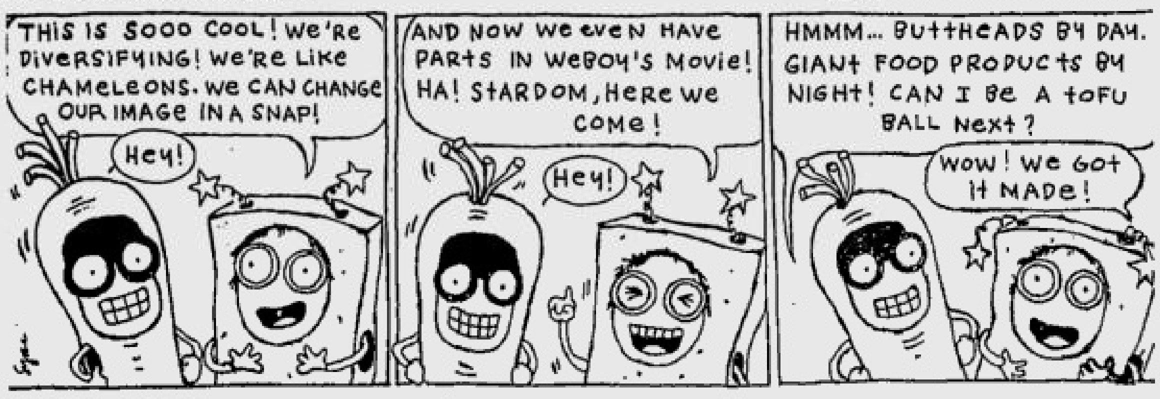
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


SO... MRS, BATES, HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD THIS FIXATION ABOUT SHOWERS ?
Dist. by Tribune Media Services Inc ©2002 Grimmy, Inc. grimmy.com
3/25
PSYCHO THERAPY

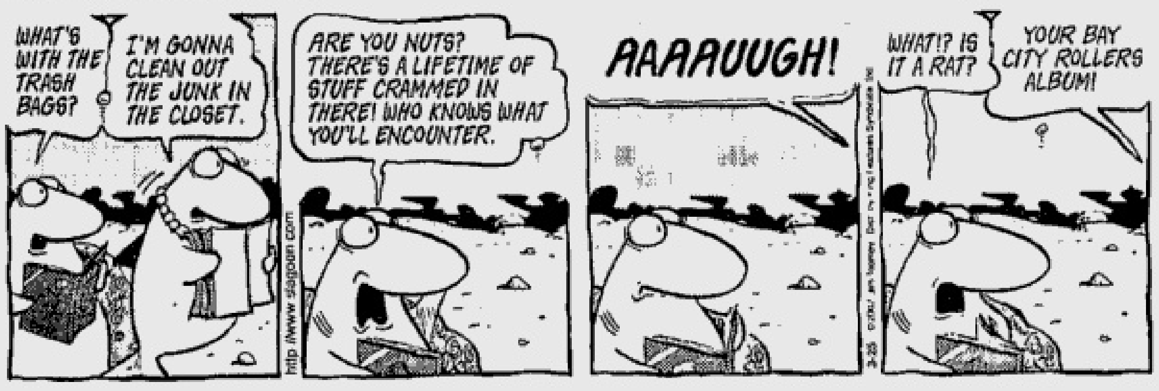
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


THIS IS SOOO COOL! WE'RE DIVERSIFYING! WE'RE LIKE CHAMELEONS. WE CAN CHANGE OUR IMAGE IN A SNAP!
Hey!
AND NOW WE EVEN HAVE PARTS IN WEBOY'S MOVIE! HA! STARDOM, HERE WE COME!
Hey!
HMMM... BUTTHEADS BY DAY. GIANT FOOD PRODUCTS BY NIGHT! CAN I BE A TOFU BALL NEXT?
WOW! WE GOT IT MADE!

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


WHAT'S WITH THE TRASH BAGS?
I'M GONNA CLEAN OUT THE JUNK IN THE CLOSET.
ARE YOU NUTS? THERE'S A LIFETIME OF STUFF CRAMMED IN THERE! WHO KNOWS WHAT YOU'LL ENCOUNTER.
AAAAUUGH!
WHAT!? IS IT A RAT?
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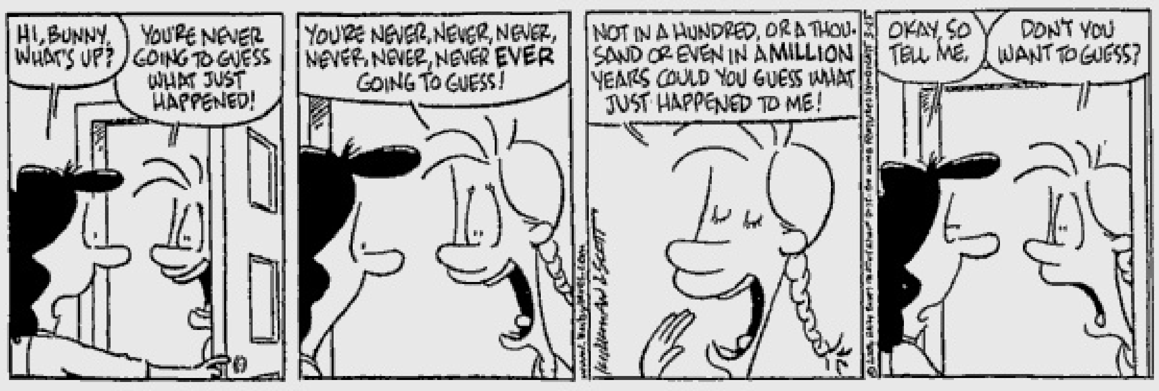
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HI, BUNNY, WHAT'S UP?
YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO GUESS WHAT JUST HAPPENED!
YOU'RE NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER, NEVER EVER GOING TO GUESS!
NOT IN A HUNDRED, OR A THOUSAND OR EVEN IN A MILLION YEARS COULD YOU GUESS WHAT JUST HAPPENED TO ME!
OKAY, SO TELL ME.
DON'T YOU WANT TO GUESS?

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Elton John, Aretha Franklin, Sarah Jessica Parker, Hoyt Axton

Happy Birthday: Leadership is something that you may become quite familiar with this year. You will take an active role in social and sports events that can provide you with the competition you require. You'll be determined to do your own thing and you'll excel along the way. Your numbers are 4, 15, 17, 19, 23, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): This is a great day for love and romance. Be quick to make your move and to tell someone special exactly how you feel.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Don't let your emotions stand in the way of your judgment. Being stubborn will only hold you back. If you refuse to see the bigger picture you will probably fall short of your expectations.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Call upon friends and relatives to help you make the changes that you feel are necessary. Something worth reading will come via snail mail or e-mail.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may feel as if the whole world is against you but that just isn't true. Open your eyes to all the opportunities around you and take the positive road .

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Romantic development is in the stars. Your vibrant presence and entertaining manner will make you very appealing. You are now sitting in a position that will allow you to pick and choose so be discriminating.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You may have some health concerns but keep in mind that worrying could be at the root of your problem. Take time out to relax a little and to determine what it is that is constantly nagging away at your psyche

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't overreact to things going on at work. Put yourself in a position that is valuable and you won't have to worry about your future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take it nice and slow today and don't let life's little hazards hold you back or send you off on a tangent. Stick to what you know and do best.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Put on your best duds and prepare to face the world. Let your worldly outlook lead the way and you'll be sure to discover all sorts of intriguing people.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): If something has gone awry in your financial picture you'd better start going over your investments with a fine-tooth comb. You can save yourself some cash and some disappointment if you make a couple of changes now.

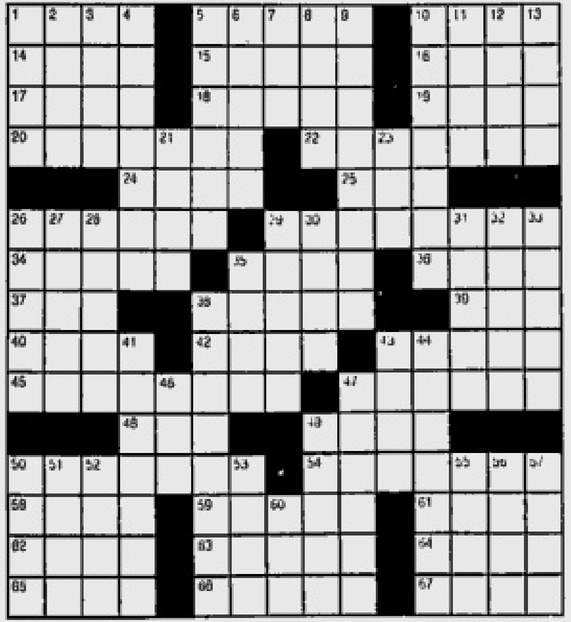
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Make sure that you've made arrangements to spend time with someone you care about or engage in events that will introduce you to a number of possible partners.

PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20): This is your day to achieve. Set out early and get the day off to a good start. Your astute way of doing things will certainly help you grab the attention of your colleagues.

Birthday Baby: You are optimistic, ambitious and outgoing. You are friendly, interested, and love to interact with others. Freedom is important to you.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

3/25/02

ACROSS
1 Charity
5 Setting
10 Jolts
14 Violent melee
15 Leslie of "Gigi"
16 Toward shelter
17 Land unit
18 Anxiety
19 Third power
20 Best Actor, "Life is Beautiful"
22 Best Actor, "The French Connection"
24 Understands
25 Negatives
26 Unattractive
29 Best Actress, "Room at the Top"
34 Separated
35 Gloomy effect
36 St. Petersburg river
37 D.C. VIP
38 Best Actor, "It Happened One Night"
39 Combine
40 H.S. dance
42 Sale caveat
43 Swiftly
45 Best Actress, "Dead Man Walking"
47 Flora
48 Joke
49 Verbal
50 Best Actor, "The King and I"
54 Best Actor, "Lilies of the Field"
58 Pelee spew
59 Poison
61 Eternal City
62 All tied up
63 Regretting
64 Mr. Redding
65 Lucy's husband
66 Affirmatives
67 Power unit

DOWN
1 Semite
2 Parasites on people
3 Dawn 'til noon
4 Best Actor, "In the Heat of the Night"
5 Meager
6 Celestial dog
7 Work unit
8 Snack
9 Complicate
10 Best Actress, "Women in Love"
11 Grad
12 Ms. McEntire
13 Observed
21 Yiddish money
23 Lifer
26 Simple locks
27 Met fare
28 Landed estate
29 Noted virologist
30 Woes
31 Staff again
32 Dislodge
33 Levies
35 El __, TX
38 Contraptions
41 Best Actress, "The Rose Tattoo"
43 Jai __
44 Best Actress, "Shakespeare in Love"
46 Bobbsey twin
47 Tines
49 Spout thoughts
50 Ran in the wash
51 Spout nonsense
52 Designer St. Laurent
53 Lecher
55 Jot
56 Radiate
57 Break
60 Greek letters

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	H	I	E	S	■	■	■	■	■	B	R	E	S	T
P	A	R	R	O	T	S	■	S	T	R	E	T	T	O
E	N	V	E	L	O	P	■	C	R	U	S	H	E	R
A	S	I	N	I	N	E	■	R	A	T	T	I	E	R
K	E	N	O	■	S	C	R	A	P	■	H	O	P	E
S	L	E	W	■	I	T	E	M	S	■	O	P	E	N
■	■	■	■	■	L	A	M	B	■	■	M	I	S	T
M	A	S	S	■	S	C	O	L	D	■	E	A	T	S
A	N	T	I	■	■	U	R	E	A	■	■	■	■	■
L	A	R	D	■	G	L	A	D	Y	■	S	P	A	S
A	L	E	E	■	L	A	S	E	R	■	T	O	S	H
R	E	A	L	T	O	R	■	G	O	R	I	L	L	A
I	M	M	O	R	A	L	■	G	O	O	F	I	E	R
A	M	E	N	I	T	Y	■	S	M	E	L	T	E	D
L	A	R	G	O	■	■	■	■	■	S	E	E	P	S

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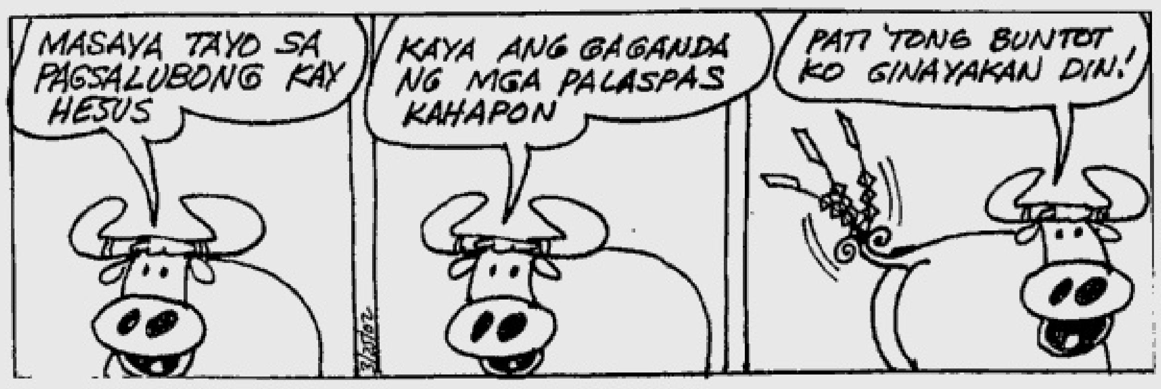
3/25/02

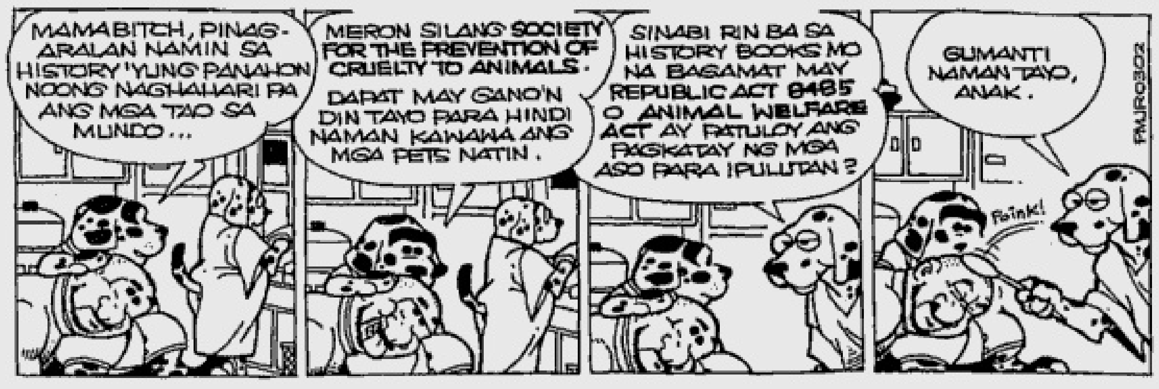
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MASAYA TAYO SA PAGSALUBONG KAY HESUS
KAYA ANG GAGANDA NG MGA PALASPAS KAHAPON
PATI 'TONG BUNTOT KO GINAYAKAN DIN!

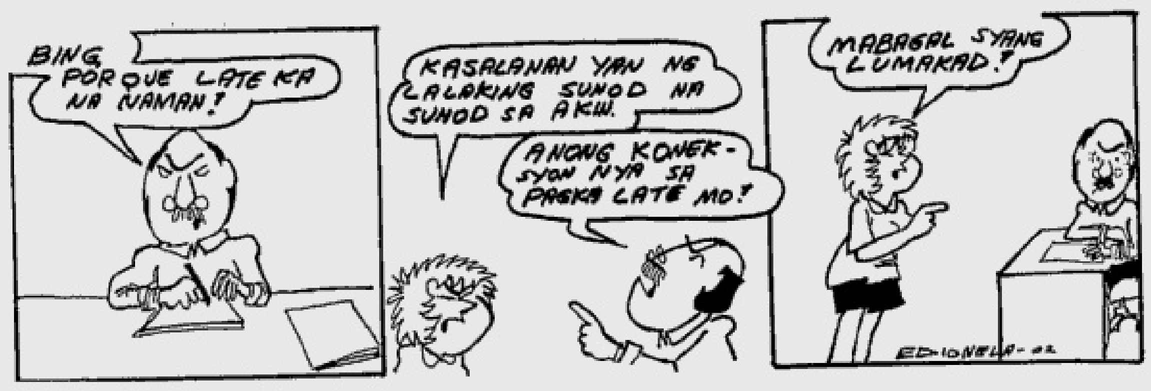
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAMABITCH, PINAG-ARALAN NAMIN SA HISTORY 'YUNG PANAHON NOONG NAGHAHARI PA ANG MGA TAO SA MUNDO...
MERON SILANG SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.
DAPAT MAY GANO'N DIN TAYO PARA HINDI NAMAN KAWAWA ANG MGA PETS NATIN.
SINABI RIN BA SA HISTORY BOOKS MO NA BAGAMAT MAY REPUBLIC ACT 8485 O ANIMAL WELFARE ACT AY PATULOY ANG PAGKATAY NG MGA ASO PARA IPULUTAN?
GUMANTI NAMAN TAYO, ANAK.
Poink!
PMJR0302

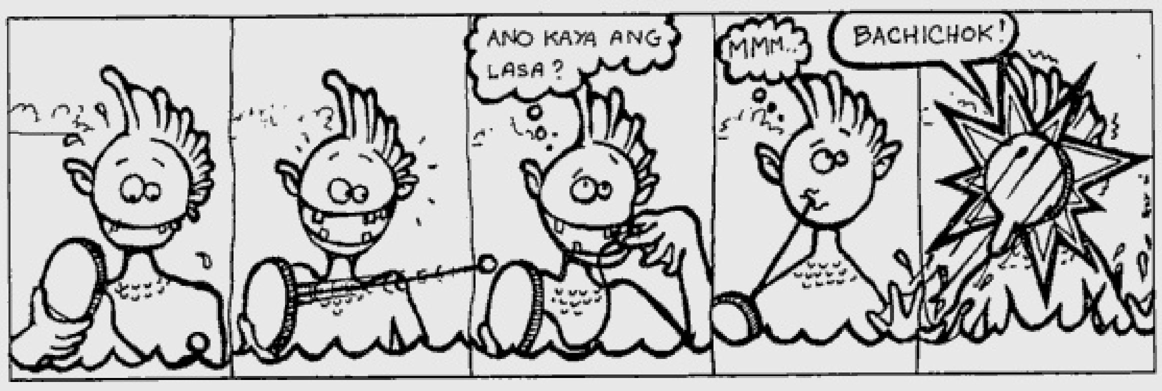
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


BING, PORQUE LATE KA NA NAMAN!
KASALANAN YAN NG LALAKING SUNOD NA SUNOD SA AKIN.
ANONG KONEKSYON NYA SA PAGKA LATE MO?
MABAGAL SYANG LUMAKAD!
EDIONELA-02

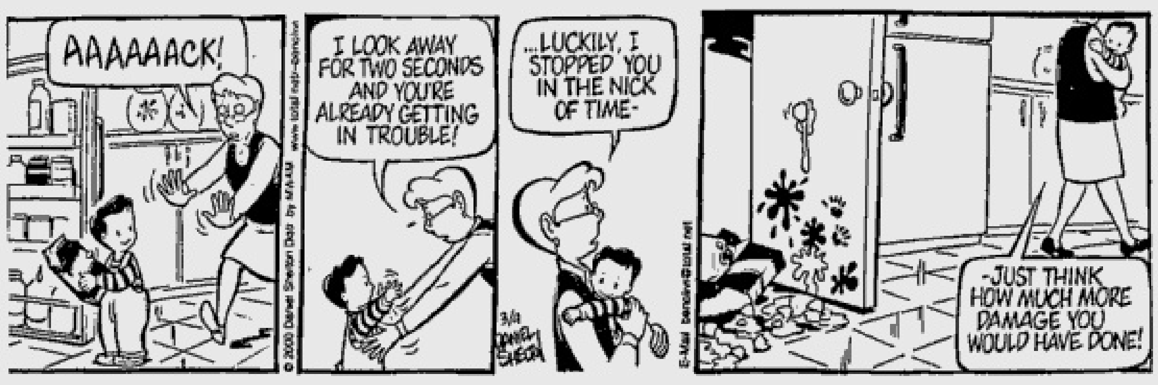
CHICHOY CHOKOY

BY IKOY RICIO


ANO KAYA ANG LASA?
MMM..
BACHICHOK!

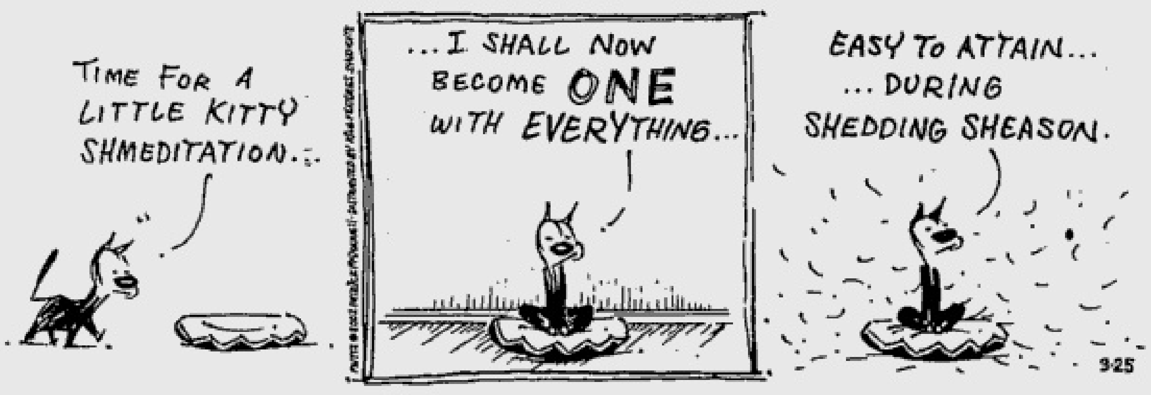
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


AAAAAACK!
I LOOK AWAY FOR TWO SECONDS AND YOU'RE ALREADY GETTING IN TROUBLE!
...LUCKILY, I STOPPED YOU IN THE NICK OF TIME-
-JUST THINK HOW MUCH MORE DAMAGE YOU WOULD HAVE DONE!

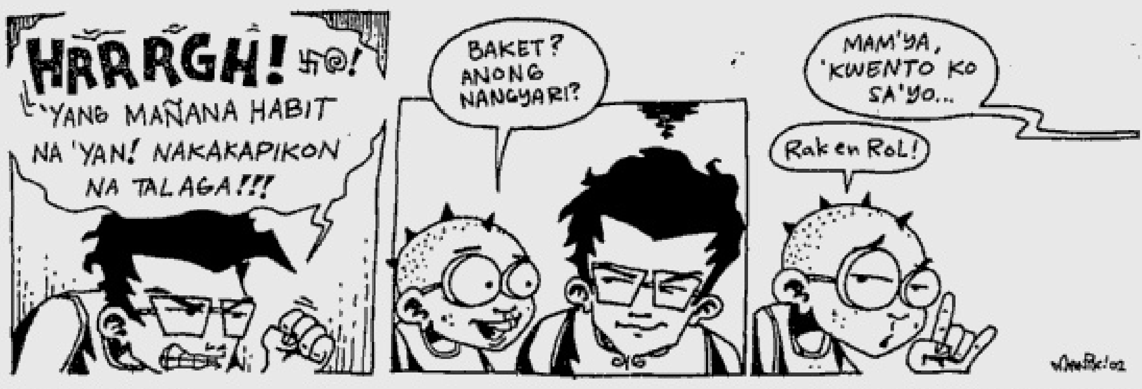
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


TIME FOR A LITTLE KITTY SHMEDITATION...
...I SHALL NOW BECOME ONE WITH EVERYTHING...
EASY TO ATTAIN... ...DURING SHEDDING SHEASON.
3-25

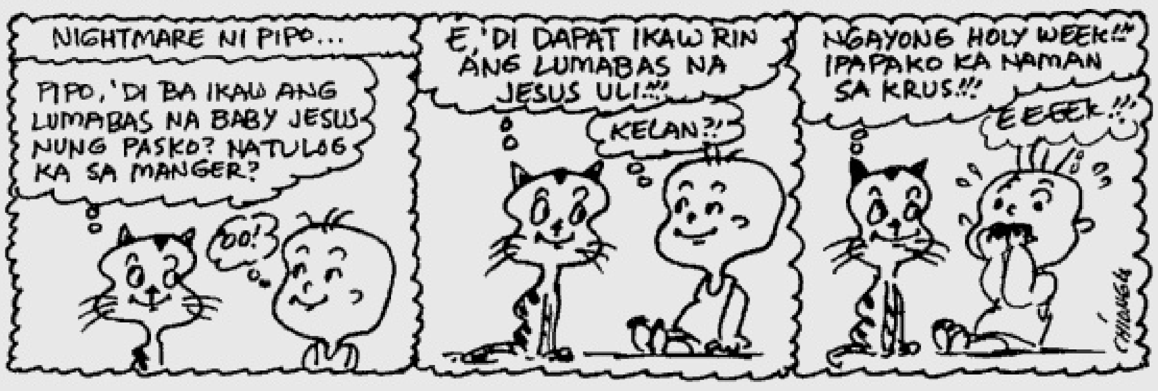
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HRRRGH!
'YANG MAÑANA HABIT NA 'YAN! NAKAKAPIKON NA TALAGA!!!
BAKET? ANONG NANGYARI?
MAM'YA, 'KWENTO KO SA'YO...
Rak en Rol!

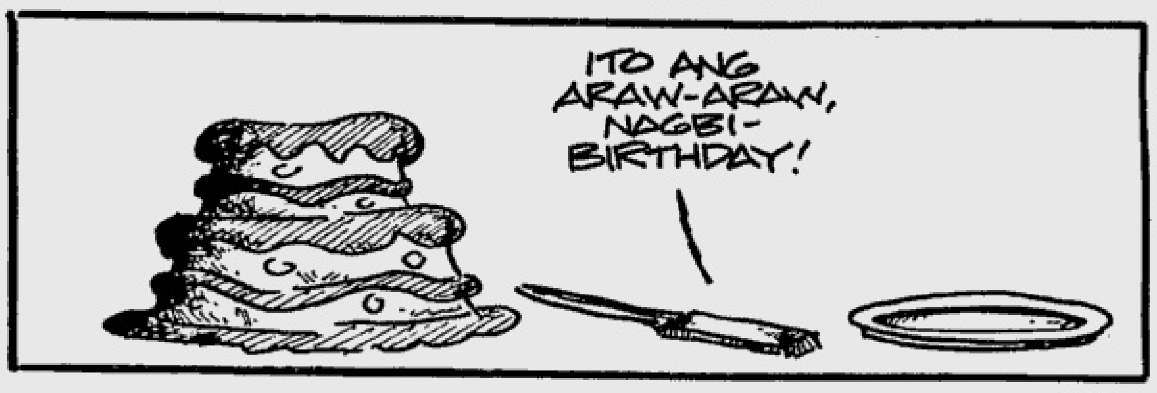
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


NIGHTMARE NI PIPO...
PIPO, 'DI BA IKAW ANG LUMABAS NA BABY JESUS NUNG PASKO? NATULOG KA SA MANGER?
OO!
E, 'DI DAPAT IKAW RIN ANG LUMABAS NA JESUS ULI!!!
KELAN?!
NGAYONG HOLY WEEK!!! IPAPAKO KA NAMAN SA KRUS!!!
EEEEK!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ITO ANG ARAW-ARAW, NAGBI-BIRTHDAY!

VIVIAN Yuchengco

Divinely inspired inspirations

From page E1

by, but Agot's favorite part reads: "You were born with the right to be happy. You were born with the right to love, to enjoy and to share your love. You are alive, so take your life and enjoy it."

Vanessa Garcia
Powerboxing instructor

Vanessa cites self-help guru (and another Oprah favorite) Iyanla Vanzant's "One Day My Soul Just Opened Up." She quotes from the book: "The key to never being disappointed: When you really want something, don't make anyone else responsible for you getting it." Vanessa also offers a passage from Joel Goldsmith's "Parenthesis in Eternity": "The moment we stop trying to make God come to us, we will realize that God is already here." The book is Goldsmith's treatise on the "Circle of Eternity" and "how to transcend the 'parenthesis' of our everyday lives that falls between life and death," as Amazon.com describes it.

Rock Drilon
Artist

The book "A Bit of Life" holds a special place in this visual artist's heart and mind, not only because it is authored by an uncle, J. Drilon. It is not an inspirational tome, but to the painter, it is, especially for the words: "We were in battle because elsewhere leaders failed to make the peace."

Timi Nubla
Business reporter, ANC

Timi picks "How Do You Know Your Pearls Are Real?" by Barbara Gonzalez, a collection of personal essays. "How do you cope, my friends ask. I do not cope," Gonzalez writes. "Coping has an element of strife and battle in it. It connotes a short-term emergency, as in coping with a difficult situation. It evokes images of people struggling to hold up a stone wall that threatens to collapse on them. It has a touch of desperation and survival. We do not cope, we enjoy ourselves, we manage our lives."

Ian Giron
Designer

Ian quotes from "In the Meantime," another popular Iyanla Vanzant book on relationships: "There will come a time when you realize/ Where you are is not where you want to be/ When you know that nothing is wrong/ But it just feels like something isn't quite right/ That time, that place, that experience/ we're calling that 'in the meantime.'"

Bea Valdes
Interior designer

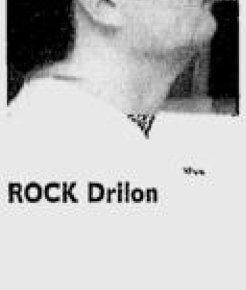
"It's not quite a quote from a book," Bea says, "and instead of being spiritual or inspirational, I guess it's more about the spirit or 'lateral inspiration.' When (Jean) Cocteau was asked which one thing he would save from his burning house, his reply was rather simple and brilliant: 'I would save the fire!'"

Sister Mary John Mananzan, O.S.B.
President, St. Scholastica's College

Sister Mary John says the quote is "interesting especially because it comes from a man—and a bishop at that!" It is from Bishop John Selby Spong from the book "Why Christianity Must Change or Die: How to Remain a Believer Without Giving up Your Intelligence." "The Church, dedicated to the worship of a God who was called 'Father,' has consistently justified its rampant discrimination against women as the will of this patriarchal deity, or, at the very least, as something idolatrously called the 'unchanging sacred tradition of the Church.' I do not care to worship a God defined by masculinity. I am no longer tolerant of gatherings where all the participants are men, sitting in a solemn assembly, clothed in their ecclesiastical dress, and acting as if they can determine what a woman may do morally with her own body. I have no interest in being part of an institution

DIVINELY/ p.E6

SR. Mary John Mananzan, O.S.B.



ROCK Drilon

'PASYON'

From pagan passion to religious devotion

REVIEW

LENT is never complete without trademark rituals that foster our remembrance of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, practices whose histories can be traced back to the first centuries of our Christianization.

Rodel Aligan, O.P., takes up one of these centuries-old practices—and arguably the most prominent—in "Pasyon" (UST Publishing House, 2001, 176 pages). The book traces the history of the Lenten *pabasa*, our popular chanting of the story of Christ's road to the Cross, ending in His Resurrection. Specifically, the book centers on the history of the first *pasyon*, Gaspar Aquino de Belen's "Ang Mahal na Pasion ni Jesukristong Panginoon Natin sa Tola" (1703).

Aquino de Belen's seminal work is the predecessor of texts now used in the *pabasa*. But Aligan points out that the *pasyon* was not intended to be what it is now, a chanted devotion during Lent. Rather, it was written for the pastoral intentions of the early Philippine Church.

Aligan studies the folkloric elements of the "Mahal na Pasyon" and brings into the fore the role it played in the Christianization of pagan Filipinos. He says the *pasyon* was originally chanted at wakes as a substitute for the pagan rituals of the native *babaylans* (priests).

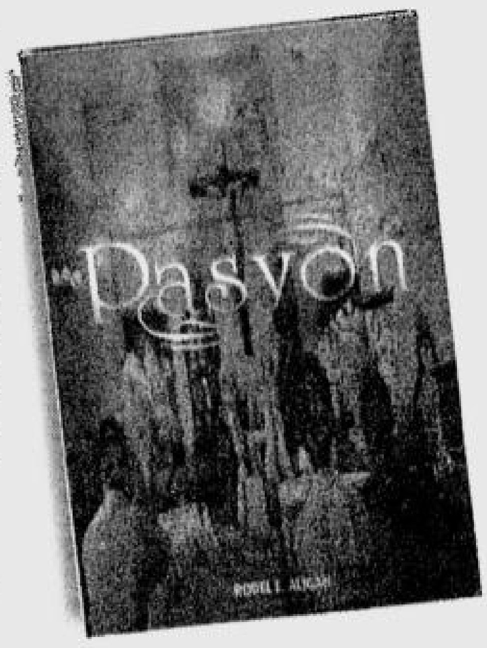
The *aral* we now find in the current *pasyon* served as a reminder to the readers and listeners of the temporary nature of life, chiding the affluent listeners for their love of material things.

Aligan does not say clearly how the *pasyon* morphed into the Lenten *pabasa*. What he highlights, especially in the third chapter, are its contributions to the inculturation of Catholicism in the country, how its folkloric elements brought the process of evangelization down to the level of the people.

Aligan doesn't require the reader to be learned in theology to understand the book. "Pasyon" just seeks to present a historical account of the origins of the Lenten practice. At the least, it gives us an idea of how the *pabasa* came to be embraced by the Filipinos as a way of expressing devotion during the Lent.

Eldric Paul Peredo

Available at National Bookstore. Call 731-3101, local 8252, 8278, or 731-3522.



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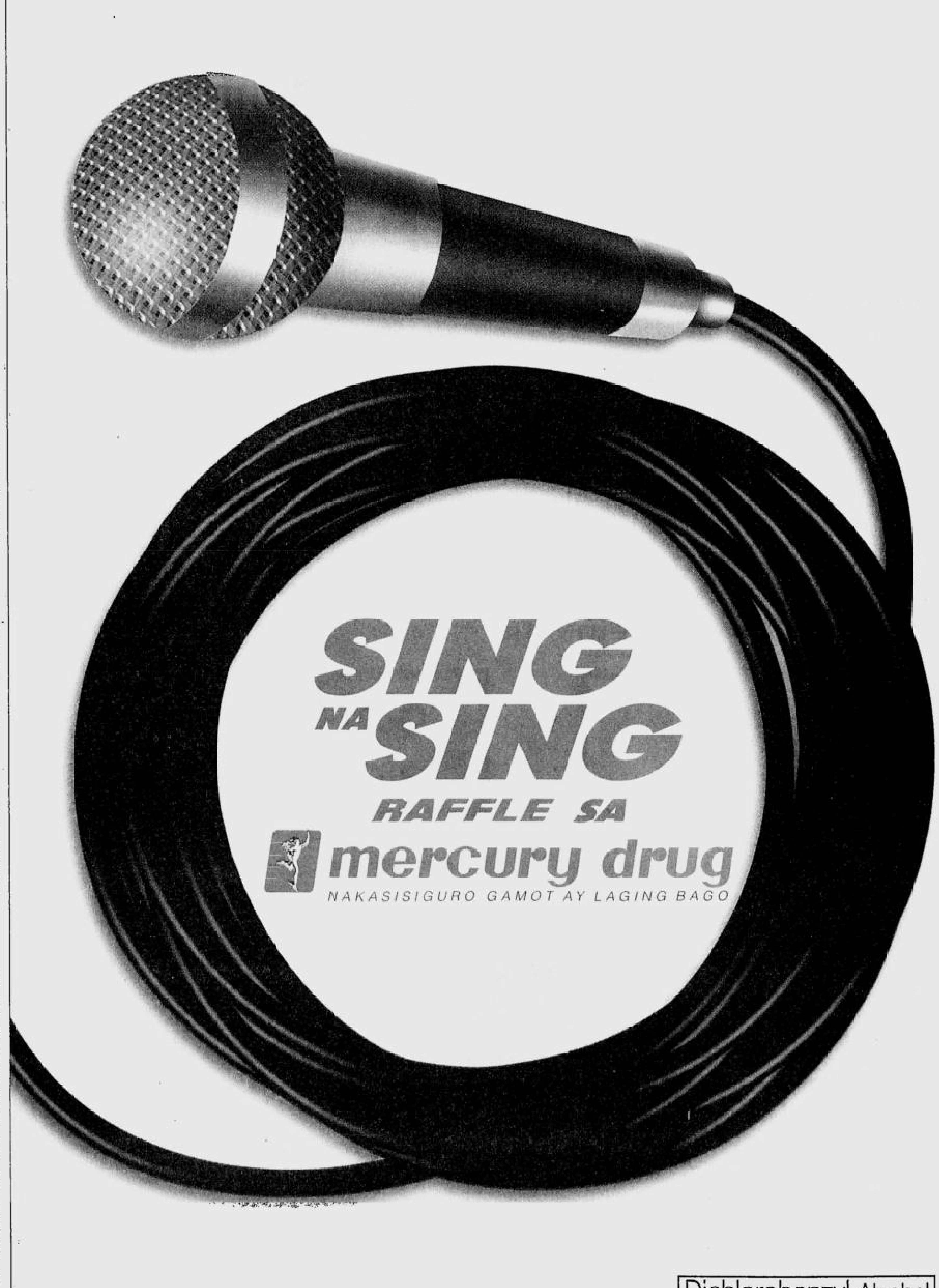

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When priests throw in the habit

By Eldric Paul Peredo
Contributor

REVIEW

CATHOLICS give special reverence to the man who decides to enter the priestly ministry. One only has to look around to see how the priest is treated lavishly when he visits households, how he is awarded that unique place of distinction, that sense of awe.

This gives rise to some priests' having to explain that they are but human in times when they err. They are not above the human plain.

We can't blame people for acting like that. After all, the priesthood is a vocation not accorded to many. Since the priest serves the Church, choosing to walk down that narrow path is generally considered as an exclusive call from He Whom the Church ultimately serves—God.

No wonder Filipinos literally raise their voices to heaven in thanks when someone of kin decides to enter the seminary. It is as if they have higher chances of being saved, because they have someone close to them who is in turn close to God, or, at least, has been given preference by Him as to become one of His shepherds.

But what if the priest leaves the ministry? He gets all sorts of flak from even those whose chests ballooned with pride while he lay prostrate before the altar. He gets abandoned and even disowned by family, and, if he is without the proper background and means to help him get along in the world, goes on to live a miserable existence.

"Leaving the Priesthood" (Ateneo de Manila Press, 2001, 279 pages) by Emmanuel R. Fernandez, seeks to examine the complicated issues involved when a priest decides to turn in his cassock. Himself a member of the diocesan clergy, Fernandez did the study for his doctoral dissertation in sociology. It is now published as a book.

The author says that what spreads like a plague when a priest does leave the ministry is the rumor that he couldn't keep his vow of celibacy and might be having a secret relationship. His thesis was to prove that "priestly departures," as he calls them, are a lot more complex than that.

> He who leaves the priesthood faces a miserable existence

"Leaving the Priesthood" presents the story of 12 priests who decided that they were in the wrong state of life. The reasons range from personal ("inner harmony") to the political ("clerical politics"). To balance his study, Fernandez interviewed three other priest who find fulfillment in remaining steadfast in their vows and ministry.

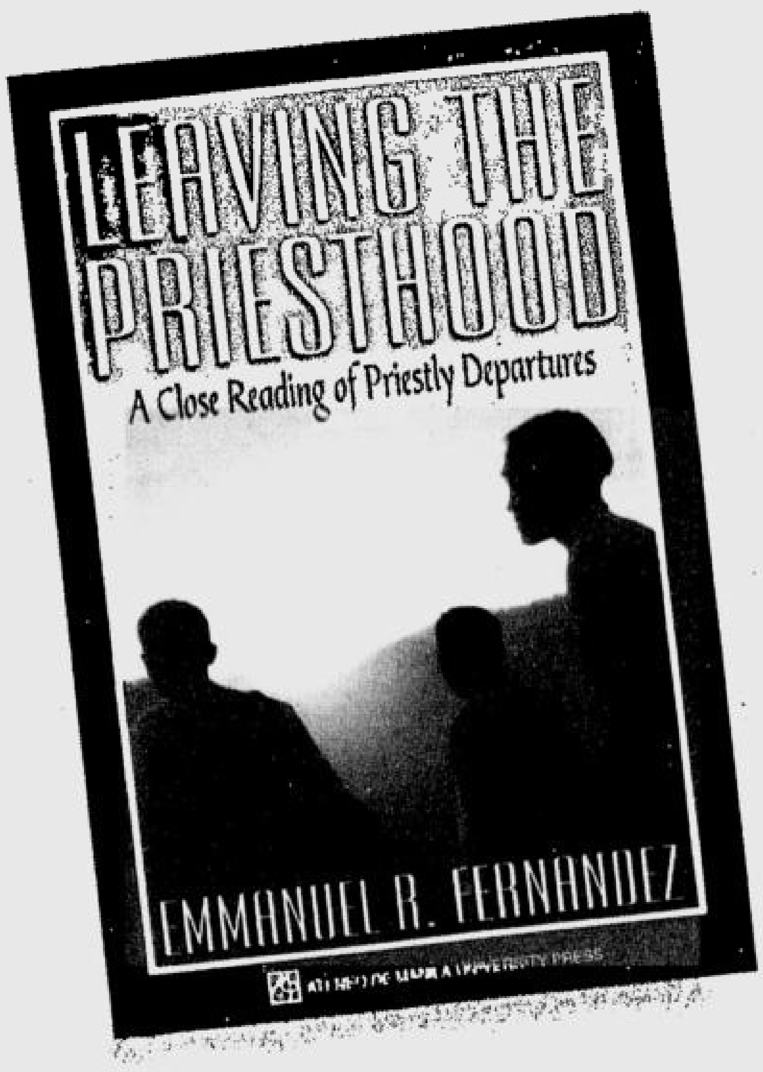
By using what he calls the life-story format, the author makes the accounts more personal and thus more real, because he lets his interviewees have their own voice, though subjected to editing and deletions to protect their privacy.

The book, however, remains true to its nature as a scholarly study. Fernandez inserts his own analyses after each section, offering explanations of the priests' cases from the point of view of sociology. And in the last chapter, he draws a general schema of why priests depart.

Finally, he stresses the importance of continuing such a study. As he points out in the beginning, the ratio of priests to the faithful is rather discouraging, and further examinations of the phenomenon of priests abandoning the ministry could yield ways to curb it.

All in all, "Leaving the Priesthood" is a novel way of presenting more clearly the stance of former priests, who, in one way or another, have been ostracized by society because of their radical move. It's a fast and easy read, and the reader might even laugh or sympathize in all the right places, as this one surely did.

Available at National Bookstore, Filipino Bookstore, Ateneo Bookstore and Solidaridad


LEAVING THE PRIESTHOOD
A Close Reading of Priestly Departures
EMMANUEL R. FERNANDEZ
ATENEO DE MANILA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Divinely inspired inspirations

From page E5

that is so deeply biased against women and intends to stay that way."

Jose Antonio Arando
Yoga instructor

Arando of Yoga Philippines quotes from T.S. Eliot: "We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

Fr. Robert Reyes
Priest, activist

The "running priest" speedily sent a text message: a phrase from the prayer of St. Augustine. "Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Not from a book but possibly the most fitting passage for everyone who seeks to contemplate on and—as Oprah would say—remember the spirit this season.

FR. Robert Reyes

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Judging was held on February 28, 2002 at Focus Global Inc. in the presence of a DTI Representative.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0805 Series of 2001

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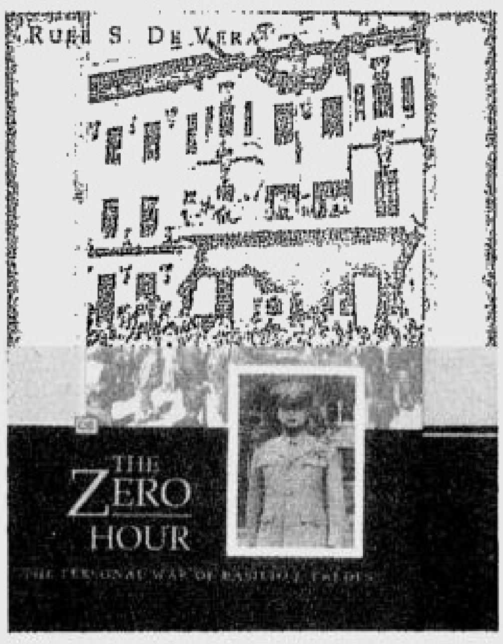
A general's journey through war and liberation

The Zero Hour: The Personal War of Basilio J. Valdes
By Ruel De Vera
The Bookmark Inc., Makati City, 2001
285 pages

By Doreen G. Fernandez
Contributor



DO you remember World War II, the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, the *tatlong taong walang Diyos*? The days of the Death March, Bataan, evacuation to the mountains, disrupted farming and industry, guerrilla warfare, and, for some, leaving home and being away for years? The years after what was nostalgically called Peacetime, when everyone longed for a return to a world without war?

REVIEW

You have surely heard how President Manuel Quezon, ill with tuberculosis, and finally dying in the United States, was accompanied and surrounded by his men.

Gen. Basilio J. Valdes was one of those men, a medical doctor who "played a crucial part in the history of the Philippine Army" and undertook "the dangerous and daring mission" of getting Quezon out of the country even as the Japanese military pursued him and his Cabinet.

"The Zero Hour: The Personal War of Basilio J. Valdes" was written by journalist-poet Ruel S. De Vera to pursue, retrieve and record the Valdes story. He built the book on notes Valdes left behind, almost as though he had an idea that the chapters of history in which he played a role would eventually become chapters of a book. De Vera notes his "eye for drama and... ear for dialogue," and the spare words that reflected his admiration and loyalty for his President, as well as the worry felt for his family left behind in Manila.

With the guidance of publisher Lory Tan, the young biographer undertook to walk in Valdes' footsteps, to tread the paths and experience the journeys by air and water that he took in the tunnels of Corregidor, through the Visayan islands down to Del Monte, where Quezon, Valdes and their party took off and left the country. He trekked through written sources as well, especially "The Good Fight," Quezon's autobiography.

And he listened to voices: Manuel "Nelin" Nieto Jr., remembering life as one of Quezon's close-in security men; Bobby Montalvan, recalling Quezon's visit to Oroquieta, and especially the voices of Nucay Matute Llora, sick at home when her father left for Corregidor, and Nini Quezon Avancena, the sole surviving member of the journey out of Manila and to the United States, and the Quezon family. What had not been written down, she remembered, connecting these with Valdes' notes, filling the gaps left by memory and circumstance.

The story begins with "Tsunami Warning." On Dec. 7, 1941, a gala was being held at the Manila Hotel for Gen. Lewis Hyde Breretson, the high-ranking officer presiding over American forces in the Philippines. Enter Maj. Gen. Basilio Jose Valdes, "an officer among officers," and chief of staff of the Philippine Army, close friend and trusted adviser to Quezon.

Foreboding was in the air. Earlier, President Quezon had hinted at the chance of war as he watched a parade and review of the ROTC cadets who had just spent a month in training at military camps, the reserve forces the Usaffe could call on. Were these fresh young faces ready for war?

The morning of Dec. 8, 1941, General Valdes was wakened by Gen. Richard K. Sutherland, Gen. Douglas MacArthur's chief of staff, saying: "We are at war with Japan. The Japanese planes have bombed Pearl Harbor."

President Quezon, recuperating in Baguio, was informed about the bombing, and the wheels of war started to hum. Japanese planes bombed and devastated the Davao harbor and airfield. At the bombing of Nichols Field, the Usaffe forces lost virtually all their planes. Soon Japanese planes were flying directly over Camp Murphy, and hitting the Cavite Naval Yards. Japanese forces eventually made their swift way toward the Philippines by decimating air assets, pummeling land troops and landing amphibious forces.

Quezon and his war Cabinet, including Valdes, whose official role was bolstered by his being an old friend and de facto personal physician, heard Christmas Mass in the Corregidor Malinta Tunnel, celebrated by Fr. Pacifico Ortiz, S.J. (who was inducted into the chaplains' corps early in the war, and was the President's personal chaplain).

In February 1942, Quezon and his party (Valdes, Nieto, Vice President Osmeña, Father Ortiz and Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos) left Corregidor on the USS Swordfish, an American submarine.

"The Zero Hour" is the story of Valdes' journey through war and "liberation": the return of MacArthur, the destruction of Manila and his own personal homecoming. His wife, Bombona Legarda, and their beloved adoptive daughter Nucay, whom he called Charito, were waiting throughout. At war's end, huddled indoors and listening to the sounds of fighting, they could not venture out because of the danger from stray bullets.

Valdes walked into their house at 163 San Rafael, and found no family; not even furniture. Nucay looked out the window, hearing new vehicle sounds, and thought they might be Americans. A neighbor met a disappointed, sorrowing and fearful Valdes, and told him his family was at the Legarda house.

Nucay and Bombona saw uniformed men talking to the neighbors, and gasped to realize that one of them was not an American. Recognizing "that resonant formal voice" and "military posture," Nucay flew crying into her father's arms. "She never remembered crying so hard or feeling so happy as she ran to the uniformed man and was swept up in the strong, waiting embrace of Basilio Valdes."

Author De Vera tracked this general-officer-physician-father through thickets of texts, interviews, memories and documentary records. He not only takes the reader on this trip with accuracy, clear historical perspective and excitement; he makes it a replicable journey anyone can take, through a World War or personal wars, toward transformation and homecoming.

It is a book fathers and mothers, historians and journalists, teachers and students, indeed, Filipinos of all persuasions, would do well to read, reflect upon, be inspired by, and use to evaluate their own personal life journeys.